CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-FOURTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 14 August 1997, at 10 a.m.

President: Mrs. Krasnohorská (Slovakia)

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The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I declare open the 774th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

On my list of speakers today I have the representatives of New Zealand, Iraq, Australia - speaking as Special Coordinator on anti-personnel mines - and Kazakhstan. I give the floor to the representative of New Zealand, Ambassador Pearson.

Mr. PEARSON (New Zealand): Madam President, may I first congratulate you on assuming the presidency and assure you of my full cooperation in the exercise of your duties?

It is both an honour and a pleasure to address you for the first time today, particularly as New Zealand's first Ambassador for Disarmament. I want to take this opportunity to thank those colleagues for the warm welcome extended to me since my arrival. I shall do my best to cooperate and to work constructively with all of you.

New Zealanders care deeply about the need for disarmament. We have participated in more than enough international conflicts this century to have a real appreciation of what is at stake and what this Conference is expected to achieve. In striving for a world that is free of nuclear arms and other no less awesome weapons of mass destruction, New Zealanders are looking to this Conference to deliver that imperative. So far this year, our record has been one of deadlock and inflexibility. It is a situation for which we must assume responsibility and one that all of us will be reflecting upon seriously. This state of affairs cannot continue indefinitely. The time has come for some creative new thinking. While I understand that the curtains in this chamber remain closed for most of the time, as a new arrival let me assure delegates that there is a real world outside. It is demanding that we make progress and there is no understanding for the fact that we appear to be suffocating in process rather than in outcomes. We all know that there has never been a more auspicious time for us to move forward.

Madam President, let me assure you and delegates that New Zealand will continue to search for the middle ground in moving ahead, because clearly that is the only way we shall be able to re-engage. We are ready now, for example, to start work on fissile cut-off negotiations in a way that takes into account differing views on its scope. We have an open mind on how we might pursue other initiatives before us. The New Zealand Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Right Honourable Don McKinnon, outlined in detail our approach earlier this year in this Conference. I would commend delegates to reflect on those proposals again.

We have consistently urged this Conference to begin a dialogue on nuclear disarmament. We advocate this should be a two-track approach - a preparatory track and a negotiating track. In doing so, we consider our priorities should be, first, to identify those proposals on which we can add value now. Secondly, we should determine those areas where we can add value in the future. Finally, we should seek to establish how we can best support progress to be undertaken by the nuclear-weapons States themselves. We are not looking to constrain work in this Conference by imposing time bindings or

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tactical linkages on nuclear or conventional weapons. We do not think that is a productive way to proceed. Working for the reasonable middle ground is the only way we want to see progress in addressing all disarmament imperatives. And, we consider it is achievable. It is a challenge that we shall continue to pursue.

While we have stalled in our tracks so far this year, the appointment of the four special coordinators are steps that should not be undervalued. This is a good moment for us to revisit issues such as membership, functions and the agenda. This Conference has to come to grips also with what it can realistically achieve on landmines. With the appointment of the four special coordinators, we know that these issues are in capable hands and I look forward to cooperating with them. I wish to touch on some of these institutional aspects today.

On improved and effective functioning, let me say at the outset, as others have done, that it would be wrong to confuse any review of procedures with the separate question of membership. Similarly, consideration of wider membership should not be predicaced by concerns over functioning. That would result in the tail wagging the dog. Certainly, the Conference on Disarmament is having to adjust to its increased size, but we are confident this is manageable and will be in the future. If our procedures are not capable of delivering our outcomes, then we should not hesitate to change them. This is in our gift. The issue of consensus, however, appears to be set in concrete in this Conference. Whether it is possible to make a distinction between procedural issues and those of substance is clearly problematic. The only way to do so would be to define the parameters in each case and then design a more flexible formula for dealing with procedural decision-making. We would agree with others that the problems we have seen so far this year are as much matters of policy difference as shortcomings in our system of operation. But, that cannot be the excuse for avoiding the search for innovative alternatives. The problems we face are not unique. New Zealand wishes to see NGOs participate in this Conference to the fullest extent possible. While some might argue that the present arrangements are not unreasonable, we would welcome greater input from NGO delegations. New Zealand is amongst those countries which already consult widely and productively with these organizations. There are some other matters of process on which I would like to comment. For example, we would not be opposed to time limits on speeches. We do not, however, see the need to constrain ourselves by adopting motions of closure. Open-ended consultations are proving to be valuable because they enhance transparency, but one wonders whether this setting is conducive to informality. I join others in asking whether there is not a more suitable room for these consultations where we can at least see each other. With respect to the role of the presidency, we believe the present term is fine. More important, however, is that the powers of the presidency appear to have become eroded. We would strongly support moves for these to be restored. We would go further in suggesting that the President should have the right, for example, on a "best endeavours" basis, to consult parties with widely differing views in an effort to facilitate a consensual outcome.

New Zealand has warmly welcomed the ongoing efforts of the Secretary-General to reform the United Nations. We are encouraged by his

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clarification that the July package of proposals in the disarmament area are designed to jump-start one of the United Nations' more important areas of activity. Indeed, we would have wished to see more far-reaching reforms proposed in this area. There is much for member States to work through before the start of the next General Assembly session. And we must also start thinking about the future work of this Conference in the light of the reform process. This body should look also at implementing output-driven reforms. And it should take the initiative rather than wait to have the changes imposed from outside. When one looks at our group structures, there are few who would not acknowledge that we are operating with machinery from a bygone age. We are not suggesting this should be dismantled forthwith, but let us not rule out change. Our experience with group consultations is that they are extremely valuable. Other, so-called like-minded, groups will operate independently and do so successfully. Inevitably, like-mindedness in disarmament will differ on an issue-by-issue basis. But there is no reason why this Conference and its President should not recognize the existence of other coalitions on occasions when they themselves wish to speak collectively.

On questions relating to our agenda, we would want to join calls to reshape this into a generic format and one that is more durable in time. Do we really need to revisit the agenda every year when our programme of work also allows us to set priorities for our sessions on an annual basis? Disarmament issues are not resolved in tidy annual packages, nor is this a factory for mass-producing treaties. We would be keen to explore the adoption of a thematic and balanced agenda which has a longer lifespan and can deliver the necessary flexibility for us to get on with the real work.

New Zealand considers also that this Conference should take more fully into account consensus-driven calls for action from the United Nations General Assembly. Our rules and procedures require this, yet we seem to be immune to this expectation. We should address this shortcoming in a more responsible way and in a manner that is in step with today's world. This leads me to wonder whether the Conference should consider becoming pro-active in explaining its business to the wider community. There is an image problem to be addressed and this is an organization that is not as widely understood or as appreciated as it should be, I suggest.

Turning to the consideration of future membership, I want to reiterate that New Zealand fully supports the principle that this should be open-ended. We do not hold to notions of what may or may not be the optimum size. The Conference on Disarmament cannot claim representational exclusivity when it is dealing with issues that are global. We would support further consideration of how enlargement might reasonably be managed, perhaps in a phased way. We would be opposed to preconditions being made. But it is not unreasonable that we should ensure a representative geographical mix. We should bear in mind, too, the expectation that applicants have demonstrated a commitment to the work of this Conference. And, in our considerations, we should be mindful of the dates of existing applications.

I want to take this opportunity today to reflect on the question of landmines. New Zealand is one of many countries, both within this Conference and outside it, that is committed to the Ottawa Process. This process has

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real momentum behind it. And it meets the overwhelming international imperative for early action: something this Conference, unfortunately, has been unable to deliver. The Ottawa treaty will open the window for considering other action on landmines in the future. We are open-minded as to how this might be pursued, either as an annex to the treaty, or in the context of the Inhumane Weapons Convention or within this Conference. We shall await with interest the interim report from the Special Coordinator and any recommendations that may be made for further consideration of this issue in the CD itself. In considering what role this body might play in the future, we must ensure that it will reinforce and not dilute in any way the ban on landmines. Any action must be consistent with, and not merely "complementary" to, the Ottawa treaty. There would be strong objections from within this chamber and from outside should any subsequent action in the CD have the effect of undermining the Ottawa treaty or its humanitarian imperatives. Options that might offer the convenience of à la carte solutions are not the way to proceed, we believe, and could risk undermining the integrity of this body. Finally, while we have problems to resolve and challenges that we cannot avoid, this body has proved in the past that it can meet these. New Zealand is not pessimistic about its future. My appointment as New Zealand's first Ambassador for Disarmament is evidence of that commitment and that confidence.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of New Zealand for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Iraq, Ambassador Al-Tikriti.

Mr. AL-TIKRITI (Iraq) (translated from Arabic): Madam President, allow me at the outset to offer you my best wishes for success in your high office. We have full confidence in your skill and wisdom, and our delegation will cooperate closely to ensure the success of the proceedings.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend the former Presidents of the Conference on their praiseworthy efforts to move our work forward. I would also like to welcome the distinguished Ambassadors of Chile and New Zealand. The Conference will certainly benefit from their wisdom and experience and from their valuable contribution to our work in the CD. I wish to assure them of my delegation's cooperation to ensure the smooth progress of the CD, whose success is of importance to us all. I wish the distinguished Ambassadors who have left us every success in both their public and private lives. Our Conference greatly appreciates their outstanding contributions and achievements.

Given the developments in international relations in the last decade and the beginning of the current decade, all members of the international community must recognize that it is essential for all States to participate on an equal footing in promoting the common interests of mankind. Their participation must be based on the provisions of the United Nations Charter, the rules of international law and the principles of justice and equity. The achievement of that goal unquestionably depends on the adoption of measures to promote disarmament on an equitable and objective basis that guarantees the natural rights of States to security, peace and respect for their sovereignty and independence.

(Mr. Al-Tikriti, Iraq)

Our Conference can point to two major achievements in the recent past: the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty. Despite the great difficulties and challenges which confronted the Conference during that period, a steadfast determination and desire to succeed overcame the difficulties and challenges and the Conference took a giant step forward on the path towards the elimination of weapons of mass destruction and nuclear disarmament. We are fully confident that the Conference on Disarmament can make further progress along that path if the disinterested political will to do so exists. The international community has placed its confidence in this Conference and we must take care not to undermine that confidence. While the serious nature of the Conference and the wisdom and experience of its members inspire us with optimism, the amount of time wasted since the beginning of the session in argument and discussion without reaching agreement on the programme of work fills us with disappointment and regret. I agree with my colleagues who have described it as a dialogue of the deaf, because since the beginning of the session we have only been able to adopt the agenda and appoint the four special coordinators. Although that was a step forward, it falls short of the Conference's aspirations and abilities. The time has come for the Conference to take its responsibilities more seriously and we are confident of achieving the desired results if, as I said, the disinterested political will to do so exists.

With regard to the programme of work of the Conference, our delegation forms part of the Group of 21 which submitted the proposal contained in document CD/1462 of 5 June 1997. We view the proposal as a commendable move by the Group to facilitate the proceedings and as a sound basis for agreement. Our delegation is pleased to state that we are willing to work with all parties, keeping an open mind and motivated by a desire to advance the cause of world peace for the benefit of all. But we also feel that the text should be acceptable, practical and balanced and take account of the views and concerns of all Conference members, since this would create an atmosphere of trust and thwart the efforts of those who are endeavouring to obstruct the work of the Conference on Disarmament and prevent it from achieving the lofty goals for which it was established.

Iraq considers that the priorities established in the Final Document of the first special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament, held in 1978, are still valid. That historic document gave top priority to nuclear disarmament, since nuclear weapons constitute the greatest danger to mankind and to the survival of civilization. The nuclear States parties to the NPT bear a special responsibility in that area, and our delegation therefore strongly supports the establishment of the committee which is to be responsible for agenda item 1, entitled "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament". We are aware, given the depth and scope of this subject, that the desired results cannot be attained overnight. However, the establishment of this committee is, in our view, the first step towards achieving a convention on comprehensive nuclear disarmament

Iraq considers that a pragmatic approach should be adopted to disarmament issues, particularly the issue of comprehensive nuclear disarmament. Moreover, as the collective security of States is indissociable from the goal of world peace, the Conference should give more attention to

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issues relating to international security within a new framework and on the basis of effective measures. The various aspects of international peace and security are to be achieved through disarmament and confidence-building measures, including the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones as a global project encompassing all States belonging to different regions with the aim of achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world in accordance with article VII of the NPT.

The Middle East is one of the regions that the international community is trying to free from the nuclear nightmare and from all weapons of mass destruction in accordance with General Assembly resolutions and paragraph 14 of Security Council resolution 687 (1991), which provides for the establishment of a zone free from weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, and all missiles for their delivery. Although more than six years have passed since the adoption of this resolution, we have seen no serious move or action to implement this paragraph.

As I have already said, our view of the issue of comprehensive nuclear disarmament is realistic, open-minded and impartial. Pending achievement of this lofty humanitarian goal, we view the provision of unconditional security assurances by the nuclear-weapon States to the non-nuclear-weapon States as one of the main concerns of the peoples and States in the latter category. Indeed, it represents the minimum requirement of the non-nuclear-weapon States. Once this goal is achieved, the Conference must press ahead with its tasks. The States in question have a fair and legitimate right to demand such guarantees, having voluntarily renounced the nuclear option when the NPT came into force in 1968. But the nuclear-weapon States have not fulfilled their obligations under article VI of the Treaty, contenting themselves with unilateral statements. If we examine such statements from the legal point of view, we find them unreliable, inadequate, fundamentally unstable and non-binding in legal terms. Furthermore, they are all conditional and add nothing new to the principle of individual and collective self-defence laid down in the Charter of the United Nations. In addition, Security Council resolutions 255 (1968) and 984 (1995) have not provided a practical solution capable of dispelling the fears and doubts of the non-nuclear-weapon States regarding their security. The two resolutions merely provide positive assurances, most of which are already contained in the Charter of the United Nations. Our delegation therefore thinks that the time has come for the Conference on Disarmament to take a serious, objective and impartial look at the subject and to re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee with a view to negotiating a binding and verifiable instrument under which nuclear-weapon States would undertake to refrain from the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States.

Another key issue is the arms race in outer space. In that connection, I wish to refer to resolution 51/44 adopted by the General Assembly at its fifty-first session on prevention of an arms race in outer space and concentration on peaceful uses of outer space. The resolution requests the Conference on Disarmament to re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space with a negotiating mandate with a

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view to conducting negotiations for the conclusion of an agreement to prevent an arms race in outer space in all its aspects. My country supports the re-establishment of this committee as soon as possible.

Another issue that has begun to attract the attention of the Conference on Disarmament since becoming a talking point in other forums and in the media is that of anti-personnel landmines. I am not here to present a detailed account of the excruciating pain and suffering that have been inflicted by such mines in different countries, and also in our own region, the Middle East, which contains almost half the total number of mines laid throughout the world. The delegation of Iraq believes that this issue cannot be approached in any realistic way without clearly specifying the humanitarian goals and national interests of States as priorities that call for comprehensive disarmament measures. Otherwise, the banning and elimination of mines will remain an unattainable goal and subject to selective interpretations based on circumstantial considerations.

For the adoption of an international instrument, it is essential to specify clearly ways and means of eliminating mines. Moreover, the instrument must be binding on all States, particularly those with large and highly developed industrial and military facilities, in order to control the production and exportation of anti-personnel landmines and prevent their proliferation throughout the world. Those countries must also be involved in their destruction and eradication since they possess the necessary technology and experience and are therefore in a position to offer their assistance, a move that would greatly facilitate the negotiations. The practical implementation of such an international instrument would involve various measures such as the preparation of detailed plans of mined areas and sites, the categories of mines involved and the laying procedures. This preparatory work would facilitate the handling and clearance of mines by means of the advanced detection and clearance technology possessed by a small number of States.

In 1991 Iraq was the victim of a large-scale invasion from which it inherited a large number of mines laid on its territory and coasts. As is known, certain parties tried to clear the mines from part of Iraq's territory, not for purely humanitarian reasons as announced at the time but for overtly political reasons. The invasion left behind an enormous number of unexploded anti-personnel mines. We have been providing the United Nations with details of these mines since 1992. The Iraqi authorities are trying to destroy them because they have claimed many lives among our people and severely damaged their livelihood. This has been confirmed by the report of the United Nations Inter-Agency Humanitarian Programme in Iraq published on 3 April 1996, which stated that landmines have adversely affected agriculture and the daily lives of the Iraqi people.

An international ban on anti-personnel landmines cannot come about through unilateral statements by just a few States. There is a need for the establishment of rules which are consistent with international law applicable in this area. Due regard must also be paid to the circumstances prevailing in different regions, many of which are still involved in conflicts and subject to domination, influence and threats of the use of force against their

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countries and peoples. The assistance in mine-clearing provided by the United Nations is useful but should involve close coordination with the national authorities in the countries concerned and should not undermine their national security or be used to achieve political aims that were not included among the objectives set forth in United Nations resolutions on the matter.

With regard to the ban on fissile materials, we join other delegations in expressing the view that any convention adopted in the future on this subject should cover the production, acquisition and storage of such materials and should contain a definition of fissile materials consistent with that in article 20, paragraph 1, of the Statute of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and specify the armament activities and explosive devices using fissile materials that are to be prohibited with a view to halting the production, acquisition and storage of such materials in nuclear and non-nuclear States. In addition, my delegation considers that the ban on fissile materials used in the manufacture of nuclear weapons should include materials with an enrichment of 20 per cent or above, and that it should cover currently stored materials and future production of such materials for either military or civilian purposes in excess of one kilogram. The materials should be placed under Agency surveillance to prevent their reutilization for military purposes.

We also wish to stress the need for a highly developed international surveillance, verification and safety system, to be implemented by a specialized body associated with the International Atomic Energy Agency and applying the safeguards of the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM), following the declaration of all stocks of fissile materials in the facilities of nuclear-weapon States and States with advanced nuclear programmes with a view to determining the fate of fissile materials stemming from the dismantling of nuclear weapons and nuclear explosive devices or as yet unused materials. Attention must be paid to fissile materials to ensure that they are used for peaceful purposes throughout the world. The convention should be binding on all States parties, whether or not they are also parties to the NPT. It should also be non-discriminatory, multilateral and universal, and should be provided with effective means of verification. My delegation views this convention as a component of the time-bound programme for the removal and destruction of all nuclear weapons.

Transparency is vitally important and more than necessary in the case of disarmament measures, since it helps to build confidence and dispel excessive doubts. To be effective and comprehensive, such action must follow the correct path, since transparency relates not only to the transfer of conventional weapons but also to non-conventional weapons. As everybody knows, the issue of transparency is closely related to concerns of national security and its preservation, particularly since an impartial observer will not find a single region of the world that is entirely free from tension and conflict. National interest and the acquisition of weapons for self-defence are among the main concerns that affect the positions adopted by countries when it comes to honouring their obligations with respect to disarmament and that determine the degree of frankness and transparency that they reflect. The United Nations Register, relating to conventional arms only, which was established by General Assembly resolution 46/36 L, on which Iraq abstained,

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does not, in our view, meet the security requirements of some countries, particularly in regions where tensions exist, and does not dispel their fears. On the contrary, it intensifies their fears and concerns because a high degree of transparency is in some respects incompatible with national security interests, particularly where there is a major qualitative discrepancy in the categories of weapons - especially nuclear weapons - held by some parties in those regions. This is ultimately conducive to imbalance in terms of demands for transparency and openness because of the lack of balance among the parties in the region where tensions exist.

Iraq, whose implementation of Security Council resolutions concerning weapons of mass destruction was an example of transparency since it presented regular systematic data and statements concerning activities related to such weapons, considers that the measures provided for in the resolution on transparency in the field of disarmament cannot be viewed as a set of effective international measures designed to protect the security of States, enhance their independence and sovereignty, and avert the danger of war and conflict. Accordingly, Iraq, in view of its national security concerns and in the light of its experience, demands that all neighbouring countries in the Middle East comply with the principle of transparency by declaring all their weapons, including weapons of mass destruction and missiles for their delivery.

Before concluding my statement, I wish to mention another important issue, namely the expansion of the Conference on Disarmament. We support steps to open up the Conference to all candidates, since its expansion would broaden the basis of representation so as to reflect the existing membership of the United Nations. However, this move should not impair the general quality and efficiency of the Conference proceedings, which stem from a careful and scrupulous approach to the process of selection and observance of agreed rules and guidelines. In this connection, we welcome the appointment of the Special Coordinator for expansion of membership, the Ambassador of Austria, and wish him success in his work. We trust that he will complete his consultations and present his proposals for a balanced expansion of the membership of the Conference.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Iraq for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Australia, Ambassador Campbell.

Mr. CAMPBELL (Australia): Madam President, allow me first to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency and on your very commendable efforts to re-energize our Conference for the important tasks it faces. You can rightly claim to have made progress with the appointment of four special coordinators at the end of our second session. As one of those special coordinators, I would like to take this opportunity to present a progress report on my consultations with member States, this in pursuit of the mandate given me by the Conference.

Since my appointment on 26 June I have held over 40 bilateral meetings with members of the Conference on Disarmament. I appreciate the time my colleagues have made available to me as I appreciate the openness with which

(Mr. Campbell, Australia)

they have discussed the issues. In my meetings with colleagues I have outlined what I see as the four possible options for dealing with the question of APLs in the CD through the establishment of an ad hoc committee.

The first of these options is a comprehensive mandate which would have the CD endorse the objective of working towards an effective global ban on landmines and undertake work on the various aspects of such a ban - production, use, transfers and stockpiles - simultaneously. The Japanese/Hungarian mandate submitted to the Conference early this year is representative of the kind of mandate that might be considered with this objective in mind.

The second alternative, second option, is a comprehensive mandate which affirms an effective global ban as the ultimate objective, but agrees to undertake work towards this goal in a phased or step-by-step approach. The mandate submitted to this Conference by the United Kingdom delegation earlier this year best approximates this objective. A variant of this approach could allow the ad hoc committee, once established, to determine the manner and order in which it would tackle the various aspects of a ban.

A third possible mandate is one which involves a strictly partial approach to the APL problem and would have the Conference establish an ad hoc committee to look at discrete issues such as export, import and transfers and/or verification. Such a mandate would not include a chapeau which had the Conference agree that the total elimination of landmines was its ultimate objective.

The fourth possible mandate is really no mandate at all in the sense that it would have the CD agree to establish an ad hoc committee simply to review and discuss the world situation regarding landmines. I have detected no convergence in support of this option nor is it one which I believe is appropriate for an institution charged with negotiation rather than deliberation, but it is an alternative that has to be considered.

As was only to be expected, the delegations that I have met thus far have expressed a range of views, and as there are still a number of delegations with which I have not yet formally discussed the issue, I am not in a position at this stage to make any recommendation to the Conference.

I have also discussed with delegations the timing of any CD action on landmines. There are some delegations who have expressed the view to me that it would be desirable for the CD to take some decisions on a possible mandate before the end of this current session, but allowing for substantive work to begin only in the new year. Other delegations have pointed out to me the difficulty of the CD taking any decision on a mandate during this its third and last session for obvious reasons, that is, we have little time left to discuss the issue and we have to devote attention to our annual report. Other delegations have pointed out to me, and this is a view that I share personally, that there is little point in the CD taking any decisions on a possible mandate on landmines until the outcome of the Ottawa Process is known in December.

(Mr. Campbell, Australia)

I have no sense that there is any feeling amongst delegations that the CD is in competition with that process, the Ottawa Process, which will take a further step forward when negotiations on a draft treaty commence in Oslo in September. Rather, I have the feeling that delegations would wish to see the outcome of that process before final decisions on how the CD may complement the outcomes of Ottawa, consistent both with the Ottawa treaty outcome itself and consistent with the CD's mandate and status as the international community's standing arms control negotiating body. On the other hand, I have not encountered any opposition from so-called pro-Ottawa delegations to the CD taking up the question of landmines in an appropriate way in a post-Ottawa environment.

This is as much as I have to report at this stage. I am continuing my consultations with a view to completing an initial round of discussion with all States members of the CD within the next two weeks. I note that one regional group has urged me to undertake informal open-ended consultations. At this stage, I believe it is premature for me to do so. I have not ruled out such consultations but I need to have the opportunity to finish the individual discussions with States members. I do, however, agree to make myself available to the regional groups themselves should they wish to discuss the issues with me.

It is my intention to make a further report on my efforts to fulfil my mandate as APL Special Coordinator later in this third session, but I foreshadow that it will most likely be another interim report when I expect I will be seeking the Conference's agreement for me to continue my consultations in the inter-sessional period, that is, between the end of this year's CD session and the commencement of our first session in the new year with a view to my presenting a final report early in our first session in 1998.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Australia for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Kazakhstan, Mr. Volkov.

Mr. VOLKOV (Kazakhstan) (translated from Russian): Madam President, first of all I would like to congratulate you on taking up the post of President and on your discharge of the high-level and responsible functions entrusted to you. On behalf of the delegation of my country I would like to assure you of my full support.

Today I should like to take this opportunity to inform this august assembly of a statement made by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan in connection with a governmental decree dated 6 August 1997, whereby Kazakhstan declared a ban on the export of anti-personnel landmines, including re-export and transit. Kazakhstan shares the growing concern of the international community at the huge losses caused among the civilian population through the use of anti-personnel mines. In over 70 different countries, 110 million mines are still maiming and killing the civilian population every day. That is why anti-personnel mines have been dubbed delayed-action weapons of mass destruction. This serious problem, which is worldwide in scope, can only find a solution through joint international action to limit the use of anti-personnel mines and access to

(Mr. Volkov, Kazakhstan)

them, and in due course to forbid their use. The unilateral moratorium introduced by the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan provides support for the relevant resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly and is an expression of our country's commitment to the cause of strengthening international peace and security.

I would request the secretariat of the Conference to distribute the statement by the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the subject of anti-personnel landmines as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament.

I would like to take this opportunity of speaking to the Conference on Disarmament today to inform this august assembly that, in pursuance of the process which was begun in February this year in Almaty - I am referring to the Almaty Declaration adopted at the meeting of the Presidents of five Central Asian States proclaiming the movement and the path - the aim of creating a nuclear-free zone in Central Asia - by way of a practical step, an international conference on problems associated with the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons is to be held in Kazakhstan from 8 to 12 September this year, to coincide with the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Semipalatinsk test site. The conference will open on 8 September in Almaty, the capital of Kazakhstan, and will then continue its work in the city of Kurchatov in Semipalatinsk district, which is where the Semipalatinsk test site used to operate.

The agenda of this international conference includes such issues as the role of international and regional treaties and agreements in guaranteeing the non-proliferation regime, the activities of international organizations intended to support the non-proliferation regime, the system of international guarantees, support for the regime of non-proliferation in the CIS countries, and the last, concluding issue is the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. The conference will be of a practical, scientific nature. Over a period of four days, the representatives of more than 30 countries in the city of Kurchatov will have an opportunity to participate in visits to the facilities at the former Semipalatinsk test site, hear reports and discussions on practical measures to support the non-proliferation regime, consider the issue of conversion of nuclear testing sites and their infrastructure and assess the effects of nuclear testing on the environment.

Today I would also like to note and express the special satisfaction of the delegation of Kazakhstan and congratulate the Conference on Disarmament on the establishment of the post of Special Coordinator on the question of expansion of the membership of the CD and express our special support for the Ambassador of Austria, Mr. Kreid, who has been appointed to that high-level and responsible post. The delegation of Kazakhstan also considers that in the very near future all the member countries of the CD as well as States with observer status that play an active part in this work will have to accept the obvious need for political and practical support for two parallel processes - the Ottawa process and the Geneva process - not just in respect of anti-personnel mines, to note their positive achievements and, for the sake of the single goal of disarmament and the strengthening of security, to move forward in the run-up to the major conference to be held in Oslo, in Norway.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Kazakhstan for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. ORFI (Syrian Arab Republic) (translated from Arabic): Madam President, I wish to thank the Special Coordinator on anti-personnel landmines, His Excellency the Ambassador of Australia, for his progress report presented at today's meeting. Our delegation wishes to reserve the right to present its comments and remarks on this report after having studied it carefully.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic for his statement. I have no further speakers on my list for today. Do other delegations wish to take the floor at this stage?

In the light of South Africa's decision to waive its right to preside over the Conference, in accordance with the provisions of the rules of procedure, during the period from 18 August to 31 December 1997, and the information received from the representative of Spain to the effect that his country is not in a position to occupy the Chair for that period, and taking account also of the readiness of the delegation of Sri Lanka to shoulder this responsibility, and following intensive consultations, I conclude that the representative of Sri Lanka will take the Chair of the Conference from 18 August until 31 December 1997. This means that the post of President of the Conference for the next session in 1998 will be taken by the following countries: Sweden, Switzerland, the Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey, Ukraine and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

I would now like to pass on to you a few comments as Slovakia's term is drawing to an end. At the time when I took up the post of President of the Conference on Disarmament last June, following on from my friend Ambassador Absa Diallo of Senegal, I was aware of the complexity of the tasks that lay ahead of me and of the particularly difficult situation. I must confess that I had mixed feelings, but above all a great deal of respect for this post. I took the Chair with a firm resolve not to spare any effort to find possible solutions and generally acceptable compromises. Sustained efforts to develop consensus on how to handle the agenda of the Conference were made throughout this period. I myself made use of every opportunity in order to try to move our work forward in this field. Unfortunately, all these efforts have not yet produced a result because of persistent basic differences as to the priority attached by different parties to the items on the Conference's agenda. At the same time, thanks to the efforts of my predecessors in this post and the support and cooperation of all delegations, we were able to designate four special coordinators on anti-personnel mines, the review of the Conference's agenda, the expansion of the Conference and the improved and effective functioning of the CD. We have all witnessed the business-like spirit and energy with which our four coordinators got down to work. The intensification of their consultations, both bilateral and multilateral, and the obvious readiness of delegations to cooperate in this regard, point to progress in the near future. I wish them every success.

(The President)

I wish to convey to you all how grateful I am for the cooperation and support that you have given me during my term. I must confess that there were difficult moments when I was extremely appreciative for your kind support and encouragement. It was a great honour for me to preside over this distinguished body. My thanks go in particular to the group coordinators and the representative of China, who always supported my efforts to secure progress in our substantive work and unfailingly stood ready to assist. I would also like to express my gratitude to the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, and all the secretariat for their dedication and efficiency. My thanks go to the interpreters for their excellent work. It only remains for me to wish Ambassador Bernard Goonetilleke of Sri Lanka, my successor in the Chair, a great deal of success in his task and assure him of my full cooperation.

I would like to remind you before adjourning this plenary meeting that the Special Coordinator on the improved and effective functioning of the Conference, Ambassador Mounir Zahran of Egypt, will be holding informal open-ended consultations in this room immediately after this plenary meeting. I would also like to inform you that the Special Coordinator on expansion of the membership of the Conference, Ambassador Kreid, will hold informal open-ended consultations on Tuesday, 19 August at 10 a.m. in this room, and that the Special Coordinator on the review of the agenda, Ambassador Náray, will hold informal open-ended consultations on the same day at 3 p.m. in this room.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference will take place on Thursday, 21 August at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.775
21 August 1997

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-FIFTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 21 August 1997, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Goonetilleke (Sri Lanka)

GE.97-63863 (E)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 775th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I should like at the outset to extend, on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf, a warm welcome to the newly appointed representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Conference on Disarmament, Ambassador Ian Soutar, who is attending the plenary meeting of the Conference for the first time today. Ambassador Soutar brings with him rich experience on matters before this Conference. Suffice it to say that he was for three years Assistant Head of the Arms Control and Disarmament Department of the Foreign Office. I am sure the Conference will extend to him its full cooperation and support.

I should now like to make some opening remarks at the start of the Sri Lankan presidency of the Conference.

As you are aware, the 1997 session of the Conference on Disarmament will come to an end with the presidency of Sri Lanka. This being the situation, the CD has to take stock of the work it has done during the course of its deliberations in 1997 and prepare its report to the fifty-second session of the United Nations General Assembly, which is due to begin approximately a month from now.

Prior to my assumption of responsibilities of the presidency, several colleagues of mine inquired from me what plans I have to conduct the work of the Conference during my tenure. Having sat through the formal and informal meetings of the CD during the current session and noting the progress of our work, or, to be precise, the lack of it, and the remaining time available to the CD, it was not difficult for me to respond to that question. According to rule 44 of the rules of procedure of the Conference, it should begin consideration of its draft report to the General Assembly of the United Nations at least two weeks before the end of the session. This gives the Conference not more than one week to consider the substantive issues before it. We, therefore, simply do not have time to cover fresh ground.

Delegations are perfectly aware how the Conference proceeded during the first two parts of the current session. During this period, some delegations made repeated attempts to begin our work seriously and earnestly. In this process a number of documents were submitted to the CD by those delegations, both individually and collectively. Although the Conference was unable to resolve the problems it encountered in the process, these contributions remain as sentinels to remind us of the attempts made by us to overcome the difficulties we have encountered. They will also serve as the institutional memory of the CD to guide our way in the years to come. Consequently, we should not be discouraged thinking that we have wasted one whole year of the time allotted to the CD.

Looking at the situation the Conference is facing today, we have to be mindful of several aspects. The first and foremost is the fact that the CD is the sole multilateral negotiating body responsible for disarmament matters. Speaking of our negotiating mandate, Sir Michael Weston, the former Ambassador

(The President)

of the United Kingdom, in his farewell statement reminded us of the fact that negotiation can begin only when the climate is propitious for such an endeavour. If there is no meeting of minds representing the entirety of the CD membership, there is no prospect for negotiation on any issue, whether they fall into the category of nuclear disarmament, conventional arms or any other specific area of interest. However, we must accept the fact that negotiation cannot begin in a vacuum. Prior to serious negotiations, identification of subjects should take place. That should be followed by a process of consultation ending up with agreement on the parameters of negotiation to be conducted. Past experience has taught us that even after going through this process, negotiation may not take place until such time as there is a consensus to commence negotiation.

Another related factor is that the CD is not an institution that can conduct negotiations continuously year after year, and produce international instruments as if they are coming out of an automated factory. The long duration of time taken by the CD to agree to start negotiations on the CWC and the CTBT is an example of how time-consuming such decisions can be.

However, the CD cannot and must not wait motionless for situations to evolve on their own. The Conference can be pro-active and prepare itself for future negotiations by undertaking consultations and preparing the ground for such work. For example, while negotiations were under way on a CTBT, consultations were carried out by Ambassador Shannon of Canada with a view to reaching agreement on an FMCT. I have referred to this particular instance only as an example of how consultations on issues considered important by the Conference were carried out, while serious negotiations were also being conducted on a CTBT. It is my sincere hope that the CD will proceed in this manner when it begins its 1998 session.

The second aspect is the method of our decision-making. In keeping with the rules of procedure of the CD, all substantive decisions are taken by consensus. There are critics of this process. However, taking into consideration the nature of our work, it has to be admitted that decisions through another process would be difficult That being the case, delegations have to accept the fact that without a consensus, no important decision can be taken by the CD. In view of this reality, delegations cannot afford to be overambitious or attempt to force decisions on the Conference and expect such moves to succeed. How should we then proceed? In my opinion, the Conference should be ready to conduct negotiations when such a move is feasible. Meanwhile, consultations should continue on other subjects with a view to bringing them to maturity, or, in other words, to a stage where negotiations will be possible.

The third point is the autonomous character of the Conference. This has led some delegations to maintain that the CD is the master of its house. However, on certain occasions, the CD seems to have accepted the fact that it should heed the calls made by the international community. The CTBT was one such example. There is a reason for this position. For every delegation represented in the Conference, roughly speaking, there are two other delegations out there. The CD is neither self-funded, nor is it conducting

(The President)

business for its own exclusive use. It is the international community as a whole which is the eventual beneficiary of our deliberations. It is the international community whom we expect to support our endeavours and accept the final products that come out of this body in the form of international instruments. We should, therefore, not consider ourselves as a totally independent entity. Instead, we have to conduct ourselves as master craftsmen entrusted with a specific function by the international community. In the circumstances, while we make attempts to project our national views and protect our national interests, we have also to be mindful of the responsibilities given to us by the international community and our obligations towards it. It is against this background we should ask ourselves whether we have discharged the responsibilities reposed on us diligently. In 1998, are we going to conduct our business in the same manner as was done in 1997? I hope "no" will be the answer.

The Conference has exhausted one whole year attempting to decide on the programme of work for 1997. Even after reaching an agreement on the agenda, we have failed to reach any decision on the specific item or items that can be taken up for negotiation by the Conference. In the circumstances, it is rather disheartening to hear, during the informal consultations on Tuesday 19, delegations repeating their often stated positions without due regard to the existing situation in the CD.

The answer to our problem cannot be found by dividing the agenda into two or three broad areas such as nuclear disarmament, conventional disarmament, etc. and consigning all subjects into two or three separate baskets. As the delegations are well aware, despite its shortcomings, we have adopted an agenda. Our problem was more related to the work programme, or to be precise, our inability to treat separately items that are ripe for negotiation and those other items which require further consultation. The problem lies in our inability to appreciate the preoccupations of each other and the failure to be accommodating to the extent possible, in the common interest of mankind.

Towards the end of the second part of our session in June, there was a ray of hope that the CD would re-establish one or more ad hoc committees and even establish another ad hoc committee. Although we were unable to lock on to that opportunity, I am optimistic that in 1998 the Conference will be able to take a quick decision on the matter and commence negotiations as early as possible. Meanwhile, consultations can be held to narrow the differences on other agenda items. If the Conference can reach such an understanding during this session, we can jointly take pride that the era of polemics and rhetoric is behind us and the CD will face the year 1998 with justifiable confidence. With that optimistic note, I would like to conclude my opening remarks.

I should now like to invite the Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, to make a statement.

Mr. PETROVSKY (Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations): I have asked for the floor in order to bring to the attention of the Conference the statement of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, regarding the decision of the United States to participate in the Ottawa Process negotiations on a treaty banning anti-personnel landmines and his expectations from our Conference in this regard. The statement reads as follows:

> "The Secretary-General welcomes the announcement that the United States will participate in the Ottawa Process negotiations on a treaty banning anti-personnel landmines. He is convinced that such a treaty is urgently needed to put an end to the enormous suffering caused every day by this indiscriminate weapon. The action by the United States comes at a critical moment, as arrangements are being made to open formal negotiations in Oslo on 1 September. The Secretary-General hopes that the Oslo conference will succeed in concluding a truly comprehensive ban, which will come to the General Assembly for endorsement at its coming session. He looks forward to opening the treaty for signature in Ottawa this December.
>
> "The Secretary-General of the United Nations also hopes that there will be progress in the parallel efforts being made in the Conference on Disarmament to achieve universality of a total ban on these horrific weapons."

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Petrovsky, for his statement. I have on my list of speakers for today the representative of the United States of America. You have the floor, Madam.

Ms. CRITTENBERGER (United States of America): Mr. President, at the outset of my statement, let me first congratulate you on assuming the presidency and wish you every success in the performance of your important duties. You may count on the United States delegation's fullest cooperation. As you yourself have noted in your introductory remarks, among these duties we hope will include setting the stage for a more fruitful year in 1998, and your remarks certainly indicate that you will spare no efforts to try to set the proper stage. You may count, in that context, on the United States delegation's fullest cooperation.

I take the floor this morning briefly to note formally the United States policy decision concerning anti-personnel landmines, which the White House announced earlier this week.

President Clinton has made clear his firm commitment to conclude as soon as possible a comprehensive worldwide agreement banning the production, transfer, stockpiling and use of anti-personnel landmines (APLs). To that end, the United States has been working in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) to initiate negotiations on a ban that could secure the widest possible adherence. In that context, we welcomed the appointment of a Special

(Ms. Crittenberger, United States)

Coordinator on APLs and hope that his efforts will pave the way for early agreement to establish an ad hoc committee on anti-personnel landmines in the Conference on Disarmament.

At the same time, the United States notes that support for the Ottawa Process has grown significantly. We want to take advantage of the momentum behind the Ottawa Process and help build on the support it already has. Thus, as you know, the White House announced on 18 August that the United States will actively participate in the Ottawa Process negotiations which begin on 1 September in Oslo. The objective of those negotiations is to conclude a treaty text for signing in December. We will work to secure an agreement that achieves our humanitarian goals while protecting our national security interests.

Let me stress that we remain committed to the establishment of step-by-step negotiations towards a global ban in the CD. That effort remains essential since the CD's membership includes most of the major historical producers and exporters of APLs, a number of whom have said they will not participate in the Oslo negotiations nor sign any treaty that results from those negotiations.

The United States will also continue our efforts to ratify the CCW Amended Mines Protocol and urge others to do the same. That Protocol, if adhered to, could make a significant contribution to resolving the landmines problem, especially when added to other international efforts to curb these "weapons of mass destruction in slow motion".

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the United States of America for her statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. That concludes my list of speakers for today. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? I give the floor to the Ambassador of Nigeria.

Mr. ABUAH (Nigeria): Mr. President, let me warmly welcome you to the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, particularly at this stage in the 1997 calendar of the CD. We would like to assure you that this delegation will extend all the cooperation you deserve to assure the success of your work. Let me, more or less in the same breath, commend Ambassador Krasnohorská, the distinguished Ambassador of Slovakia, your predecessor, for her invaluable contribution to the CD process.

It will be recalled that not too long ago the Group of 21 submitted a proposal contained in document CD/1462 which contained certain elements which have been crying out for re-establishment of mechanisms, in this case the ad hoc committees, to take them a stage forward. In this regard, the Group noted that certain delegations had asked for time to consult with their respective capitals as to how to proceed with the requests, the proposals, of the Group of 21. In the intervention of this delegation on behalf of the Group of 21 on the 7th of this month, the question was put through you to those delegations whether they were in a position at that point in time to let the Conference benefit from the results of the consultations with the respective capitals. I have the honour again to ask the Conference through

(Mr. Abuah, Nigeria)

you whether these delegations are now ready today, in this Conference, at this plenary, to let us benefit from the instructions they have received. The idea is that work on these committees can go forward.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Nigeria for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of the United Kingdom.

Mr. SOUTAR (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): I have asked for the floor not at this stage to respond to the statement of the distinguished representative of Nigeria, but merely to, if I may, first congratulate you on the assumption of the presidency, Sir, and, secondly, to thank you and through you the members of the Conference for your very kind words of welcome, and, thirdly, to say that I look forward with pleasure to working with the members of the Conference on the important tasks which face us and which you, if I may say so, set out so succinctly in your opening remarks.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the United Kingdom for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Chile.

Mr. ILLANES (Chile) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, first of all allow me to convey to you the cordial congratulations of my delegation and express the conviction that under your expert and efficient chairmanship this Conference will make important progress. The statement you made impressed me a great deal and I believe that it is built on the basis of wisdom and my delegation would like the text to be distributed in extenso as soon as possible to delegations. At the same time, my delegation expresses its gratitude to the Ambassador of Slovakia, who discharged her duties in a vigorous and devoted manner at the helm of the Conference. We are indebted to her. My delegation also wishes to extend a very cordial welcome to the new representative of the United Kingdom, and of course to tell him that we are very willing to work with him in order to attain the objectives of this Conference.

I wish to announce that my Government has decided to participate fully in the Ottawa Process and consequently has subscribed to the Brussels resolution and will be participating in the Oslo conference as a full member. This does not in any way imply that we have changed our view that there is a great task which the Conference on Disarmament must pursue in the future on the issue of anti-personnel mines, a task that we think should be complementary to and consistent with the Ottawa Process and in no way in conflict with it. The objective of universality is a very important objective that we cannot set aside, so that we think, together with many other like-minded delegations, that from next year onwards there could be a very interesting job to be done in this Conference on this very important disarmament issue which of course has a humanitarian aspect of the greatest significance, which causes concern to world public opinion and to Governments, but which also contains other aspects that need to be studied,

(Mr. Illanes, Chile)

addressed here in a serious and careful manner so as to ensure the widest possible participation in an agreement which will be universal in scope.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Chile for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Argentina.

Mr. BENITEZ (Argentina) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, allow me to congratulate you on taking the Chair of the Conference on Disarmament and to assure you of my delegation's firm support. Allow me also to congratulate the Ambassador of Slovakia for the way she guided our proceedings during her term of office. I would also like to welcome the new representative of the United Kingdom. The main purpose of my taking the floor was simply to inform you that our country too has subscribed to the Brussels declaration and is preparing to participate in the Oslo meeting. This certainly does not signify a change in our position concerning the need we perceive for the Conference on Disarmament to engage subsequently in work which will complement the results obtained in Ottawa, and we note with great satisfaction that Latin America is united in this endeavour.

The PRESIDENT I thank the representative of Argentina for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor at this stage, particularly in relation to the question posed by the Ambassador of Nigeria in his capacity as the Coordinator of the Group of 21? I give the floor to the representative of the United States of America.

Ms. CRITTENBERGER (United States of America): I apologize for taking the floor a second time this morning, but I think, in all fairness, we do owe an answer to the question that has been put by the distinguished representative of Nigeria. At the end of the last part of our session, a number of questions were put in a long, two-day plenary regarding the work of the Conference on Disarmament. My delegation was among those that pressed at the time for establishment of ad hoc committees on anti-personnel landmines, transparency in armaments and fissile material cut-off. No consensus on those issues was reached. We hope that we can return to these questions soon with a more positive result. Also at the end of the last session, my delegation said that it was not in a position to definitively respond to the question of whether we could agree to the establishment of ad hoc committees on negative security assurances and outer space. I would like to respond to those questions now from the point of view of substance, and in the overall context of the Conference's work and the calendar.

On substance, let me recall that my delegation expressed the view that there was not, nor had there been, an arms race in outer space. Consequently, the agenda item "Prevention of an arms race in outer space" is not in our view accurate, nor is the old mandate for the Ad Hoc Committee that used to exist. You will recall that we made those points in the plenary discussion at the end of the last part of the session, and I had indicated at that time that my delegation had instructions to seek a change in the outer space mandate. Thus, while my delegation has no objection in principle to the

(Ms. Crittenberger, United States)

re-establishment of an ad hoc committee on outer space, it did not agree to do so at this time, prior to addressing the issue of its mandate. I would also like to note that during that plenary discussion other delegations also indicated some concerns with regard to the work of the outer space ad hoc committee and indicated their willingness to consult on this issue. To date, we have held no such consultations, but my delegation is prepared to participate. I would like to further clarify the United States position so that there is no misunderstanding. The United States believes that the existing outer space legal regime has served us well, and there is no evidence there is need for new procedures. We believe that were the Conference to engage on this issue, it should first identify a specific substantive subject in this area that could be discussed. We are not sure what the topic would be.

Turning to the question of negative security assurances, my delegation continues to question what such an ad hoc committee might usefully do, particularly in light of the recent steps already taken by my own Government and others in the context of United Nations Security Council resolution 984, on the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review and Extension Conference and a series of protocols to nuclear-weapon-free zones, the result of which has extended legally binding security guarantees to many parts of the globe.

Turning to the question of the overall context of the CD's work and our calendar, my delegation cannot but ask the question - What is the purpose of establishing these ad hoc committees at this point in time as we prepare to draft our final report to the United Nations General Assembly? For the United States, regardless of the import of the issues, they do not constitute the priority work we see for the Conference on Disarmament. The fissile material cut-off treaty and anti-personnel landmines do. We question what the objective would be in establishing these ad hoc committees at this point in time and whether the point would only be to report to the United Nations that we actually did something. We think that we should be honest and we should have greater respect for ourselves than that. We are not a "make work" body. We do important work when there is agreement to do it. If the object in establishing ad hoc committees now would be to break the logjam, this is indeed a desire we share, but we think the efforts would be better spent at this point in time in laying the groundwork for rapid decisions at the outset of the 1998 session so that we do not face the same problems next year as we do this year. We are prepared, Mr. President, to participate with you in your efforts to try to lay such a groundwork and are encouraged by your willingness to do so in your remarks this morning.

So, in summary, it is not clear to my delegation what the point would be in establishing these two ad hoc committees at this time. We are prepared to work with others to lay the ground for productive work next year. Of course, in our view, the focus should be on APL and FMCT. Transparency in armaments is also of importance to the United States, and we would also look positively at that time on re-establishing the negative security assurances and outer space ad hoc committees, to which we hold no fundamental objections in principle. We would, of course, as I have noted, wish to revisit the question of the outer space ad hoc committee mandate.

Mrs. BOURGOIS (France) (translated from French): Mr. President, allow me first of all to congratulate you on behalf of my country and on my own behalf on taking over the presidency, and to extend my warm thanks to you for having agreed to perform this task in somewhat exceptional and difficult circumstances. We know that with you this Conference will work well. Consequently, following your example, I must respond immediately to the question raised by one of the speakers this morning which, in a way, is addressed to the French delegation, insofar as we were one of those delegations which requested more time on the subject of security assurances in June for purely procedural reasons. We needed to check on the terms of our instructions. Of course, the French authorities are in favour of increasing the number of security assurances. I will not recall here the scale of the guarantees already afforded by my country, whether they be positive or negative, in the latter case through the relevant protocols to treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones which have all been ratified by France, which therefore cover more than 100 countries, but as far as the Conference on Disarmament is concerned, the question was more simply whether an ad hoc committee on security assurances with a mandate drawn up in 1992 was still the order of the day. I can immediately say that we have no objection in principle to the re-establishment of such a committee, nor indeed to the 1992 wording as far as this mandate is concerned.

Having said that, what exactly do we want to do? At this late date, are we trying to paper over the lack of an agreement in the Conference to get down to serious negotiations on a subject that is ripe for them - and there are at least two such subjects - or are we really trying to address a problem? We have the feeling that this is rather more of a bureaucratic procedure intended to puff up artificially our empty balance sheet for this year. This is why we hesitate to use this ploy, because we know that between now and 10 September no serious work can be done. Consequently - and I come back to your introductory statement, Mr. President - we believe that today the Conference needs to consider first and foremost the ways and means of approaching next year in a serious and specific way. There are many ways of doing this. They could involve continued consultations on various subjects, or inter-sessional work on these subjects. They could also involve the attention given to the drafting of its annual report to the United Nations General Assembly, and here I would like to indicate that, within the framework of this report, my delegation would have no objection to the subject of negative security assurances being broached in a positive way.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of France for her statement and her kind words to me. I now give the floor to the representative of the United Kingdom.

Mr. SOUTAR (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): My predecessor, in one of his last actions as the United Kingdom representative, sought instructions on the point raised by a previous speaker in order that I should have something to contribute to this morning's discussion. I find myself, like the two previous speakers, wondering whether at this stage in the Conference's calendar it is wise to devote resources and energy to the establishment of ad hoc committees on these subjects. Our

(Mr. Soutar, United Kingdom)

feeling is that, to take up a point which you made in your opening statement, Mr. President, we should concentrate our efforts at this stage in the session on creating the conditions for a smooth and rapid start to substantive work in this Conference in 1998, and I hope that this work might include enabling the Special Coordinators to pursue their consultations and to present preliminary reports, and I note in this context that the distinguished representative of Australia has already presented a first progress report. Next year, when we come to consider the establishment of ad hoc committees, we shall want to see a balance struck between the Conference's work on nuclear issues on the one hand and conventional issues on the other. For our part, I can confirm that the United Kingdom would like to see the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament reflect our key priorities on the disarmament agenda, and for the record I confirm that on the nuclear side, our top priority is the urgent negotiation and conclusion of a fissile material cut-off treaty, and on the conventional side, our top priority is to work towards the global ban on APLs to complement the Ottawa treaty, which we hope will be opened for signature this December.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the United Kingdom for his statement. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? I give the floor to the Ambassador of India.

Ms. GHOSE (India): I had not meant to take the floor today, but I am happy to do so under your presidency, Sir, and take this opportunity to congratulate you on taking this responsibility at a time when we are still, as we have been throughout this year, in a rather fragile situation. But do accept my delegation's assurances of cooperation with you during your presidency. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank your predecessor for her untiring efforts in trying to get a programme of work established by this Conference. At the same time, may I also welcome our new members, particularly the new Ambassador of the United Kingdom, to what has been called perhaps one of the most exclusive clubs in Geneva? We look forward to working with him.

The reason I am taking the floor is to set on record what our priority is. This has been stated and restated, not just by my delegation but by the delegations of the G.21, individually or through their Coordinators, throughout the year. Our priority has been, from the beginning, the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament, and we have repeatedly tried to elaborate the idea, present drafts, put forward various possible mandates for negotiation, but we have got nowhere on these. During the course of the year, therefore, and it will be recalled, Mr. President - nobody would recall this better than you, since it was Sri Lanka which had proposed that we try and get something moving, and I was very happy to hear the representative of the United States recognize that - what the G.21 has been trying to do is not to impose their priority on the CD, but to try and find a way ahead for the CD to do some work. Clearly, it cannot be our intention with two or three weeks left for the CD for us to start working on any ad hoc committee immediately, but we do see a possibility to lay foundations for a programme of work next year, and that is what I think you said in your introductory remarks. It was in that spirit that the G.21

(Ms. Ghose, India)

had tried to see where we have differing priorities. We have heard the priorities of some countries. The priority of the G.21 is clear, and clearly we are not coinciding at the present moment. So, the G.21, in a positive spirit, tried to find a way in which - not just to take up our time - the two ad hoc committees could be re-established. The two committees suggested by us are extremely important in themselves, and my delegation is very pleased to note that there has been no objection to these ad hoc committees. This does not mean that we establish them immediately, but at least we can perhaps take a decision this year to establish them next year in the programme of work. This would be a decision which would have to be confirmed by the 1998 session of the CD when it meets again in January. So I would like to repeat this point, that we are aware of the priorities of different countries. These priorities have not coincided during 1997. We have not been able to make much progress on either side. In a spirit of trying to keep the important work of the CD ongoing - and as you said, we are not sort of plucking apples off of trees, or whatever - I forgot the exact metaphor you used; we are not producing treaties out of boxes - but these are both items on the agenda. The agenda for 1997 was agreed, and we therefore felt that these would be areas where work could fruitfully start next year. In this context, I would also like to add that my delegation is not averse to revisiting the mandate, for example, of the Committee on Outer Space. The delegate of the United States has suggested that this is necessary, and we are quite prepared to cooperate to see how we can come to an agreed mandate and perhaps, Mr. President, we could leave this to you to check with delegations in the remaining two or three weeks, or even inter-sessionally since you remain President until 31 December, to see how we can come to an agreed mandate so that this item could at least be included in our programme of work in 1998.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of India for her statement and the kind words she addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa.

Mr. ALBON (South Africa): Allow me to add my delegation's congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the office of President of the Conference on Disarmament. As the Conference will recall from the last time that my delegation addressed the issue of the establishment of ad hoc committees at an informal session of the Conference, and following further consultations with my capital in this regard, South Africa's position on the establishment of an ad hoc committee on negative security assurances remains unchanged. As was previously stated in greater detail, South Africa is firmly of the view that the appropriate venue for addressing the issue of security assurances is within the strengthened review process of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Accordingly, I wish to inform you that South Africa continues to oppose the establishment of an ad hoc committee on negative security assurances in the Conference.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of South Africa for his statement and the kind words he addressed to the Chair. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? I give the floor to the representative of China.

Mr. SHA (China) (translated from Chinese): Mr. President, first of all my delegation would like to express our sincere congratulations to you on taking the Chair. We know that you are an extremely experienced diplomat in the field of disarmament. Although we have come to the final stage of our third session this year, we still hope that under your presidency we will still be able to make some headway in the remaining part of our third session. At the same time I would also like to avail myself of this opportunity to express to your predecessor, the Ambassador of Slovakia, our thanks for her industrious efforts. I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome our new colleagues, the Ambassador of Chile and the Ambassador of the United Kingdom. I would be most pleased to cooperate fully with them.

In the following I would like to briefly comment on the two points made by the Coordinator of the G.21. The Chinese delegation has always held the view that the CD should establish an ad hoc committee on NSA as soon as possible and negotiate on the provision of unconditional security guarantees to the non-nuclear-weapon States. My delegation believes that the international situation has undergone colossal changes. The cold war has ended. Confrontation has ended. The situation has relaxed. The relationship between the major Powers has also improved. If in the past there might have been some excuse for not providing security assurances, today these reasons no longer exist. Therefore the Chinese delegation holds the view that, in the first place, the demands put forward by the non-aligned countries are justified and reasonable. Second, I believe that the time is also opportune. In this regard, my delegation has the deep impression that the G.21 has long ago put forward this proposal. Today we are belatedly listening to the response made by the relevant parties. The Chinese delegation appreciates the action of making the response. This is because a late response is better than no response at all. Otherwise, someone will say again that we ran out of time. My delegation still hopes that, under your presidency and of course at your convenience, you can enter into further consultations with the parties concerned. If this is not possible this year, then at the very beginning of the CD session next year we may be able to enter into discussions immediately on this issue. If indeed technically it is not feasible to do so this year, can we reach a common understanding and come to a decision that this issue would be discussed at the outset of the CD session next year?

I would also like to make a comment on landmines. Now many countries are proceeding to Ottawa to take part in the Ottawa Process on landmines. The Chinese delegation respects the choices made by these countries and wishes them good luck. However, as far as the Chinses delegation is concerned, we believe that, whatever perspective one may have, the landmine does not deserve to become a focus of negotiation at the CD. Why? Because the landmine is too small in terms of scale. It is not qualified. In fact, the Chinese delegation holds the view that outer space is much bigger and far more important. It is said that there is no arms race in outer space at present. This is fine - we hope this is indeed the reality. Is there militarization of outer space? We hope there is not any. If there is indeed no arms race in outer space, then what is wrong with the proposal put forward by the G.21 to prevent an arms race in outer space? Therefore, we support the request of the G.21 to establish an ad hoc committee on outer space to negotiate on the issue

(Mr. Sha, China)

of the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We do not wish to see a repetition of a historical mistake. It will be too late to deal with this problem when the race has entered into an intense phase.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of China for his statement. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? It does not seem to be the case. I would be stating the obvious if I were to say that I was quite heartened by the responses given by several delegations this morning to the question posed by the representative of the G.21. If I got the sentiment of those delegations right, I believe they do not have an objection in principle to the re-establishment of the two ad hoc committees, namely, on NSA and on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, subject to certain conditions. I am certain that the Conference will agree with me that further consultations on this matter will be required to reach a final agreement. I believe that during the remaining days available to the Conference, we will be able to reach such an agreement with the kind of goodwill that seems to have entered this room, and if there are no other delegations wishing to take the floor at this point in time, I would like to move to the next item.

As I informed the group coordinators yesterday at the Presidential consultations, in accordance with rule 44 of the rules of procedure of the Conference, I have prepared, with the assistance of the secretariat, the draft of our annual report to the General Assembly of the United Nations. The draft report will be available in all official languages in delegations' pigeon-holes on Monday, 25 August 1997. My intention is to start consideration of the draft annual report at an informal plenary meeting to be held after the plenary meeting of Thursday, 28 August 1997.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held next Thursday, 28 August 1997, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 11.20 a.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.776
28 August 1997

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-SIXTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 28 August 1997, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Goonetilleke (Sri Lanka)

GE.97-63923 (E)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 776th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

As agreed at our last plenary meeting, we shall hold an informal plenary meeting immediately following the adjournment of this plenary, in order to start the consideration of the draft annual report of the Conference to the fifty-second session of the United Nations General Assembly.

I have on my list of speakers for today the Special Coordinator on the improved and effective functioning of the Conference, Ambassador Zahran of Egypt, the Special Coordinator on expansion of membership, Ambassador Kreid of Austria, the Special Coordinator on review of the agenda, Ambassador Náray of Hungary, the Special Coordinator on anti-personnel landmines, Ambassador Campbell of Australia, as well as the representatives of Germany and Iraq. I now give the floor to Ambassador Zahran of Egypt.

Mr. ZAHRAN (Egypt) (translated from Arabic): Mr. President, since this is the first time I am taking the floor under your presidency, allow me at the outset to express to you my congratulations and those of the Egyptian delegation on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference. I wish to assure you of our eagerness to cooperate fully with you in the exercise of your duties. Your presidency of the Conference comes at the end of your assignment as Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka in Geneva, thereby crowning your work and your valuable contributions not only to the Conference but to various other Geneva-based international institutions during this period, which has witnessed so many events. It is auspicious that you are assuming the presidency after the expansion of the membership of the Conference, in which you played an important role. I would like to express to you my most sincere congratulations and my best wishes to you and your family after your departure from Geneva.

I wish to take this opportunity to express my delegation's gratitude to your predecessors, Ambassador Absa Claude Diallo of Senegal and Ambassador Mária Krasnohorská of Slovakia, for their valuable endeavours during their tenure of the presidency. I would like also to take this opportunity to welcome our new colleagues who have recently joined the CD to head their countries' delegations, namely, Ambassador Javier Illanes of Chile, Ambassador Clive Wallace Pearson of New Zealand and Ambassador Ian Soutar of the United Kingdom, and I look forward to cooperating with all of them in the future.

(continued in English)

Pursuant to the decision adopted by the Conference on Disarmament at its 770th plenary meeting, on 26 June 1997, by which it appointed me as a Special Coordinator for the improved and effective functioning of the CD, I have held four informal open-ended consultations in order to seek the views of the member States on the subject. The consultations were as transparent as possible and open to non-member States participating in the work of the Conference. In addition, I have undertaken informal consultations with the respective groups and China on the outline of the draft report which I have prepared.

(Mr. Zahran, Egypt)

In fulfilling my mandate the consultations focused on issues of importance and concern to various delegations bearing in mind the ideas and views expressed by them. However, in submitting this report to the Conference on Disarmament, it is worth while noting that the delegation of Chile made a suggestion to update the CD's rules of procedure and, to that effect, it submitted a draft paper entitled "Proposed draft - Rules of procedure of the Conference on Disarmament", which the CD secretariat circulated as document CD/1473 in order to enable delegations to study it. Due to the limited time allowed to me to consult on the improved and effective functioning of the CD, I was not in a position to consult or to have a substantive exchange of views with member States on the Chilean proposal.

In order to proceed in a structured manner, I prepared a set of questions which were made available to all delegations. The informal open-ended consultations, which I organized with the valuable assistance of the secretariat of the Conference on Disarmament, were constructive and generated a rich debate. Against this background, my own perception from the consultations leads me to believe that further consultations may be required. It is to be noted that the present report has not been negotiated with member States; thus it cannot be considered as a report of the CD. I can regroup the issues in question in two categories.

As far as the first category is concerned, a better understanding seems to be detected on the following. First, it was generally felt that, while the expansion of the CD is the responsibility of another Special Coordinator, Ambassador Kreid of Austria, the aim of the expansion of the CD is to ensure a more representative membership. Any further expansion may provide an opportunity to make a change or an adaptation to the method of work of the CD.

Second, the rule of consensus in decision-making should be maintained. In the framework of consensus-building, it was felt that flexibility and mutual accommodation should be demonstrated in order to attain that objective.

Third, the need to make full use of the mechanisms provided for in the rules of procedure regarding various forms of informal consultations was recognized. In this regard, resorting to informal open-ended consultations was particularly encouraged.

Fourth, while the group system was not envisaged in the rules of procedure, the current informal regional and political groups are maintained in order to facilitate consultations among the CD members. In addition, discussions favoured consultations among the so-called like-minded countries, depending on the issue under consideration, in order to facilitate reaching consensus.

Fifth, no change in the present rules regarding the adoption of the CD agenda and programme of work at the beginning of each session.

Sixth, it was felt that the President of the CD could, acting on a request by a member of the Conference and with the concurrence of the Conference, propose to move the closure of a debate on procedural matters. It

(Mr. Zahran, Egypt)

was also recognized that it is within the prerogative of the President to establish a time limit for statements or interventions of delegations after consultation with the CD members and their consent.

Seventh, no change should be made in the current four-working-week tenure for each member country to preside over the Conference as provided for in the rules of procedure.

Eighth, the secretariat of the Conference should continue to provide the necessary professional assistance and support to the President of the Conference in the performance of his or her duties, including providing background material and information, and ensuring continuity of the functions of the presidency, since it rotates every four working weeks.

Ninth, the rules of procedure regarding the role of the secretariat and the work of the Conference on Disarmament should remain without change. In this regard, reference was made particularly to rules 15 and 17; the latter underlines the necessary support which the United Nations Secretary-General is invited to provide to the CD secretariat.

Tenth, concerning the report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations regarding the reform of the United Nations, particularly the disarmament section, the CD could have been consulted before issuing this section of the report for the sake of accuracy and comprehensiveness.

Eleventh, the interaction between the CD and the General Assembly should be maintained as far as the CD annual reports and the United Nations General Assembly resolutions are concerned.

Twelfth, the contribution of NGOs to the work of the CD was recognized. While their participation in the CD negotiations was ruled out, their continued interaction with delegations was encouraged.

As for the second category of issues, further consultations are needed on the following. First, application of the rule of consensus to matters of substance only, or both substance and procedure. In this regard, delegations found difficulty in reaching a common understanding on the definition of consensus, as well as the distinction between matters of substance and procedure.

Second, adoption of the agenda and programme of work of the Conference on a biennial or pluri-annual basis.

Third, inclusion in the annual reports of the CD of a brief description of the main themes, initiatives and proposals made through statements at the plenary meetings of the Conference without value judgement. In this regard, it was emphasized that, in accordance with the rules of procedure, the annual reports should be factual and reflect the negotiations and work of the Conference. Some delegations thought that such a brief description of proposals and initiatives in the body of the report is needed for a better reading and better consideration by the United Nations General Assembly session.

(Mr. Zahran, Egypt)

Fourth, greater involvement of NGOs in the work of the Conference, such as allowing them to deliver statements at plenary meetings, if requested. A delegation proposed that the Presidential "troika" might be authorized to organize an exchange of views with NGOs and report to the CD.

Against this background, my personal assessment is that the informal open-ended consultations on the improved and effective functioning of the CD were useful, constructive and reflected the shared desire to continue in the future the consultations to improve the effectiveness of the functioning of the CD. Hence, I recommend that the Conference on Disarmament continue consultations to re-examine the efficiency of its work in its next session in 1998 in the same format, and to benefit from the rich debate which took place during this part of the current CD session.

Mr. KREID (Austria): Let me at the outset congratulate you, Mr. President, on the assumption of your mandate and wish you well in your ongoing efforts of providing guidance and inspiration to the work of the Conference. I should also like to express my appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Mária Krasnohorská of Slovakia, under whose skilful leadership I was appointed Special Coordinator on expansion. I have the honour and pleasure to acquaint you with my findings.

On the basis of the mandate bestowed upon me by member States to examine the question of expansion, I have proceeded with consultations both bilaterally and multilaterally. Regrettably, the limited time available to me during the current session of the CD has not allowed bilateral contacts with all member delegations. Yet, in the course of meetings with the groups and of open-ended informal consultations conducted on Tuesday 19 August, I had the opportunity to collect the views of a large number of delegations, members as well as non-member participants.

Because of the brevity of time and the divergence of views expressed, I do not feel that the moment has come for me to formulate a concrete proposal for the admission of new members on which the Conference could take a decision. Rather, it appears necessary that further efforts be made with a view to narrowing down existing differences of opinion and thus laying the basis for a consensus decision.

My findings so far can be resumed in the following way. While there is no delegation opposed to expansion in principle, there are divergent views as to its appropriate timing and scope and possible selection criteria for new members. It has been stated that, at a time of prolonged dispute within the Conference on its programme of work and in the absence of substantial negotiations, the admission of new members would hardly be the proper signal. Having admitted 23 countries only last year, which equals roughly a third of its current composition, the Conference now needs to demonstrate that this sizeable increase in membership has not affected its capacity as a negotiating forum. This amounts to saying that a decision on expansion cannot be taken until there is sufficient experience to evaluate the performance of a 61-member CD. If this attitude prevails it would, of course, significantly delay action on further CD expansion.

(Mr. Kreid, Austria)

A concept which is favoured by a number of delegations is that of fixing an upper limit of membership. It was said that there is a need to define an optimum number for the conduct of negotiations. While some delegations feel that this optimum number has already been exceeded in the course of the last expansion, the others believe that there is still room for new members. However, no delegation has specified where actually the limit should be set or how such an optimum number could be arrived at.

In this context a recurrent complaint against the lack of participation of certain member countries was formulated. It is widely felt that efforts should be made in order to find out if all member countries wish to retain their seat in the Conference. It should be noted, however, that Ambassador O'Sullivan had already taken such an initiative with negative results. As to the future membership, a number of delegations stated that the will and capacity to contribute to the work of the Conference should constitute a selection criterion.

On the other hand, a considerable number of delegations felt that the CD needed to be an open-ended body and should admit each country interested in membership in order to better reflect the trends and positions prevailing in the global context and to enhance its representativeness. These delegations pleading for an open-ended CD argued that the number of participants was not decisive for the success of a negotiation, and that the current international environment no longer justified the traditional concepts of regional or any other kind of balance. Thinking in terms of balance, it was argued, was particularly unproductive in an organization which took decisions by consensus. In this context reference was made repeatedly to General Assembly resolution 51/47 A, which calls upon the Conference on Disarmament "to consider all remaining applications for membership with a view to reaching a decision on its further enlargement before the end of its 1997 session".

Notwithstanding the above-mentioned arguments, the issue of balance was frequently raised. I have therefore come to believe that the question of balance will need to receive proper attention in formulating any final recommendations to the Conference.

Apart from the demand for regional or political balance, it was argued that the Conference should admit new members in chronological order based on the date of their application for membership. One delegation suggested an approach whereby the President of the Conference submits the question of admission of each applicant country to the Conference in chronological order. Other delegations were in favour of a phased approach in a time-bound framework whereby the Conference would decide on the future date of admission of all applicant countries spread out over a number of years.

While such concepts deserve further study, it should be pointed out that neither approach would respond to the criterion of regional balance, and that the last-mentioned option of a phased admission might be found incompatible with the rule of a regular review of membership which points to a step-by-step procedure. It also leaves unanswered what should happen to future applicants who do not figure in the agreed schedule of admission.

(Mr. Kreid, Austria)

The opinion was voiced by certain delegations that future members should be chosen on the basis of their "peace-lovingness". It might be recalled that Ambassador O'Sullivan, when drawing up his list of 23 countries for admission, was, inter alia, guided by the concept of bringing countries in regions of conflict into the CD precisely in order to implicate them more fully in disarmament affairs.

Taking into consideration these results of my consultations, which I have tried to summarize as objectively as possible, it seems obvious that at this stage a decision on the question of expansion appears premature. Further work is necessary to clarify a number of concepts such as that of an optimum number of members, of the connection between effective negotiations and the number of participants, or of specific selection criteria for new members.

Most, if not all, of these considerations were already discussed at earlier stages of CD expansion. The fact that they were not developed further at that time does not invalidate them for the future, although it points to the inherent difficulty of translating such concepts into practical action.

There is a keen awareness among member States that the profound transformation of the global political scene cannot be ignored by the Conference and that it needs to be reflected both with regard to membership and working methods. Yet delegations are under no illusion as to the difficulty and maybe inescapable contradictions in trying to grapple with the opposing concepts of representativeness and effectiveness, of national security interests reflected in the application for membership and the perceived need for regional and political balance as one of the key ingredients of past expansions.

If the question of membership is regarded as one subordinated to the question of functioning of the Conference, the answer to the scope and character of the next expansion will have to be given in the light of the findings of the Special Coordinator on the improved and effective functioning of the Conference. The other option, to be sure, would be that the Conference first decides on its membership and then embarks on an examination of whether it needs to adjust its working methods accordingly.

The argument that a modest increase in membership will not have a significant impact on the work of the CD deserves proper attention as well. In such a case it might be possible to reach agreement on an expansion of membership up to a number considered tolerable for the process of decision-making in the CD. To find out what this "tolerable increase" might be could well be one of the tasks of the next Special Coordinator on expansion, should the Conference decide on such an appointment.

In conclusion, I should like to express my appreciation to all delegations which have participated in my consultations and helped me to obtain as clear a picture as possible of the prevailing trains of thought on the issue of expansion. I should also like to render tribute to the secretariat, which has indeed provided valuable assistance to me in the execution of my task.

Mr. NARAY (Hungary): Mr. President, let me congratulate you on the assumption of the presidency of the Conference. I am confident that you will provide us with strong leadership through the difficult closing weeks of the annual session. Please rest assured of my delegation's support. May I also express our gratitude to your predecessor, Ambassador Mária Krasnahorská of Slovakia, for the excellent manner in which she performed her duties at the helm of this body?

I have asked for the floor in my capacity as Special Coordinator on the review of the agenda. Following my appointment at the 770th plenary meeting on 26 June this year, I conducted bilateral consultations with almost 30 delegations representing all constituencies. I should like to emphasize that they have been far from exhaustive due to the lack of time. I apologize to those delegations, among them observer delegations, whom I could not reach this way. I had the honour to undertake collective consultations with the members of the G-21, as well as with delegations belonging to the Western Group. An exchange of views on the agenda also took place in the Eastern European Group. I also consulted with the delegation of China. I convened an open-ended consultation on 19 August this year, when members and observers had the opportunity to reflect on my preliminary report. I am grateful to Ambassadors and delegates who have made themselves available for these talks and the openness they have demonstrated. National positions have also found their reflection in the statements to the plenary meetings, which I have duly taken into account.

I wish to state that I did not have to start my work from scratch. In this context, I would like to draw your attention to the comprehensive and thoughtful report of Ambassador Meghlaoui of Algeria, my predecessor last year, which was submitted on 3 September 1996. The validity of most of his findings and conclusions have been confirmed by my consultations.

I wish to add, however, that the mandate of the Special Coordinator for 1996 was a more specific one as opposed to the rather general and less precise mandate I have received. My consultations inevitably touched upon the problem of the programme of work as well. This was partly due to the interrelated character of rules 27 and 28 of the rules of procedure of the Conference, but most importantly the different interpretation of the terms "agenda" and "programme of work" by delegations, as I will indicate in my report later. I believe, therefore, that a future discussion on the review of the agenda should be conducted in conjunction with the work programme, as was the case last year. I have no doubt that a successful review of the CD's agenda would make an important contribution to the much needed revitalization of our work.

Against this background, allow me to share with you some of the impressions I have gained from these consultations. Before doing that, let me stress that any observations or conclusions my report contains are my own and are not binding for delegations.

The observations of my report are grouped around two main schools of thought related to the agenda, though they do not cover completely all shades of opinion. This structure is not an artificial invention - rather, a natural outcome of what I have heard from you.

(Mr. Náray, Hungary)

Delegations associating themselves with the first school of thought, my consultations revealed, advocate a strong relationship between the Final Document of the first special session of the United Nations General Assembly on Disarmament, held in 1978, the Decalogue, and the actual agenda of the CD. These delegations pointed out that they did not see the roots of the problems in the content of the present agenda, or in the accepted priorities of the international community in the field of disarmament, which they still consider relevant, but rather in their implementation. As they stressed, the CD has failed to address the agenda items which are related to nuclear disarmament. These delegations pointed out that nuclear disarmament should remain the absolute priority on any future agenda of the CD. Delegations representing this position expressed to me their wish to maintain the present agenda in its entirety. In their view any major changes in the present agenda can be introduced only by a new special session of the United Nations General Assembly on disarmament. Under this concept the proper place for the selection of topics for actual negotiations is the programme of work.

The other current of opinion on this question enjoys equally wide support. In the view of these delegations, the agenda should be brought in line with the profound changes which have occurred in the world in the last couple of years. They believe that the present agenda is anachronistic and should be replaced by a new, updated, streamlined, forward-looking and realistic one. Delegations sharing this approach are of the opinion that the CD, as an autonomous independent body, is free to set new priorities and draw up a new agenda. The second basic element for this school of thinking, as formulated during the talks, is the need for a more practical agenda, focusing on items with a real potential for substantive or preparatory negotiations. The programme of work for these delegations should consist of a calendar of meetings and eventual institutional arrangements. The third and last element envisaged by the proponents of this approach is the notion of balance between nuclear and conventional items. Accordingly, they prefer the establishment of three broad items entitled "Nuclear disarmament", "Conventional disarmament" and "Other items", this last one mainly to deal with issues related to outer space. In this context, many delegations expressed support for document CD/1434. Delegations belonging to this school of thought indicated that their priority was to start negotiations in the CD on FMCT and APLs.

Some delegations with a clear preference for the first approach indicated a certain degree of flexibility, saying that they were ready to accept a kind of restructuring of the agenda if it were instrumental in overcoming the present stalemate on condition that the existing pattern of priorities favouring nuclear disarmament is maintained.

One delegation suggested the introduction of a two-tier agenda. This would amount to an entirely new structure where the agenda is split up into items reflecting the long-term disarmament priorities of the international community and items for concrete negotiations in a given year.

This concludes the review of the general considerations and proposals delegations put forward during the bilateral or multilateral consultations.

(Mr. Náray, Hungary)

Let me turn now to comments made concerning the concrete items of the agenda adopted on 14 February 1997 and contained in document CD/1446. The agenda items have remained unchanged for several years. The only change as compared with the agenda in 1996 is the deletion of item 1, "Nuclear test ban". I would not venture to provide you with exact statistics on the number of delegations favouring or opposing keeping, deleting, adding or reformulating a given item on the agenda. I trust, however, that the exchanges of views indicated some general trends in the attitude of delegations.

The comments and observations received on the concrete items on the agenda as adopted for this year are as follows:

Item 1. Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament

This was the most discussed item during my consultations. A great number of delegations conveyed to me the view that it constitutes an absolute priority for them and it is the central issue the CD must address. This stance was reflected in many statements in the plenary and in formal proposals tabled this year, for example in documents CD/1462 and CD/1463, just to mention the most recent ones.

There is a clear trend to keep this item. Many delegations, however, referring to the fundamental political changes that have taken place in the last several years, clarified their positions by proposing amendments to the actual wording. The idea was advanced to delete the first part of item 1, which would then read "Nuclear disarmament". Some proposed to reformulate this item as "Non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament". These suggestions were made with a view to better reflecting existing realities and the progress made in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

One delegation proposed to split up this item into two. At least two delegations favour its merger with item 2.

Item 2. Prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters

My previous consultations revealed a clear trend in favour of either the deletion of this item or its merger with item 1. On the other hand, several delegations indicated to me that they attach importance to this issue being reflected in the agenda.

Item 3. Prevention of an arms race in outer space

There is a clear trend in favour of keeping this item. At the same time delegations' positions differed in regard to the urgency of the problem. At least two delegations put forward the idea of reformulating this item so it would read as follows: "Legally binding document to prevent the weaponization of outer space". Some consider that the most appropriate way to address this issue would be in the context of confidence-building measures.

(Mr. Náray, Hungary)

Item 4. Effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons

There is clear general support for keeping this item, be it as a lone-standing item or under the broader group of items entitled "Nuclear disarmament". One delegation conveyed to me its doubts whether this issue was more efficiently dealt with in the CD or in the context of the NPT. One delegation proposed the notion of "positive security assurances" to be included in the agenda.

Item 5. New types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons; radiological weapons

Delegations are divided over this issue. Several delegations favour its maintenance; some others called it too vague and therefore proposed its deletion.

Item 6. Comprehensive programme of disarmament

A great number of delegations from all groups suggested the deletion of this item or at least indicated the lack of opposition on their side to do so if there is a consensus. Others called for its retention and its expansion to cover nuclear as well as conventional weapons. Proposals were made to replace it by a new item entitled either "Conventional disarmament" or "Anti-personnel landmines".

Item 7. Transparency in armaments

For many delegations this item is high on the list of priorities and most delegations do not oppose keeping this item. They stressed the need for a comprehensive scope, including weapons of mass destruction. I have, however, also registered views calling for its deletion on the grounds that it was outdated.

I would like to conclude this section of my report by listing specific proposals which have been supported to be added to the existing agenda. Some of them, like "FMCT", "conventional disarmament" and "anti-personnel landmines", have been recurrent issues in the CD's deliberations this year. My consultations did not reveal new developments in the well-known trends. Another group of proposed additions, mentioned by at least one delegation, comprises the following items: regional aspects of disarmament, and miliary restructuring and conversion. This last was proposed by one delegation with specific reference to the requirements of the post-cold-war era.

This very general outline of the impressions I gained from talks with you indicates that consensus on the future agenda is not within reach. Also due to the complexity of the questions involved and the limited time span of my tenure, I am not in a position to make any recommendations on the substance of the review of the agenda to the Conference. On the other hand, I had the impression that delegations are interested and willing to take up this issue

(Mr. Náray, Hungary)

in 1998. May I therefore recommend to the Conference to continue the consultations on the review of the agenda during the next annual session?

In conclusion I would like to thank all delegations for their support and cooperation and their active contribution. I also thank Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the CD, his deputy, Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, and his staff for their professionalism and assistance.

Mr. CAMPBELL (Australia): Mr. President, I congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency and assure you of my delegation's full cooperation as you carry out your demanding responsibilities. I also congratulate your predecessor, Ambassador Krasnohorská of Slovakia, for the effective and productive way in which she guided our deliberations. I also welcome the newcomers to our Conference.

I have asked for the floor to present a further report to the CD on the consultations I have undertaken as the Conference's Special Coordinator on landmines.

I have now held bilateral consultations with over 55 members of the Conference seeking their views on a possible mandate for the CD to undertake work on landmines and their views on when that work might commence.

My consultations thus far have confirmed that a clear majority of delegation members of the Conference are in favour, or are at least not opposed to, appropriate work commencing in the CD on landmines. While serious caution was expressed by some delegations, the mandate with the most supporters in the Conference is one which would have the CD adopt a phased or step-by-step approach to the elimination of landmines beginning with work on exports, imports and transfers. Most delegations would prefer to decide on a specific mandate in early 1998.

That said, there are at least two delegations who have indicated that they need further instructions before committing themselves to any particular course of action. There are two delegations that remain opposed to work in the CD, and there are delegations who would prefer a different mandate to the one I have just described.

As Special Coordinator I have interpreted my role as to take soundings of delegations' positions, to identify both the common ground and those issues on which opinions differ, and then to attempt to come up with a proposal which is likely to have the most chance of being adopted by the Conference.

I am at the stage of completing my soundings of delegations and identifying where they come together and where they divide. One overriding point in common is that a role for the CD cannot be precisely determined until early 1998.

With my mandate about to expire I find myself in the same position as my fellow Coordinators, that is, needing more time to complete the task this

(Mr. Campbell, Australia)

Conference entrusted to me. I therefore seek the approval of the Conference to the extension of my mandate to enable me to present a report in the first part of our 1998 session.

The purpose of that extension would be to complete my initial round of bilateral meetings, undertake consultations, including open-ended consultations as appropriate, and meet with regional groups during the inter-sessional period with a view to presenting a full and final report to the CD during the first part of our session in 1998.

Mr. SEIBERT (Germany): Mr. President, first of all, let me congratulate you on the assumption of the presidency of this Conference. We appreciate that you are discharging your duties at a difficult juncture and in anticipation of the normal alphabetical order, thus demonstrating a strong commitment to the purposes of the Conference on Disarmament. May I assure you of the full support and cooperation of my delegation? Allow me also to express my gratitude to your predecessor, Ambassador Krasnohorská, for her untiring effort to lead our work. At the same time I would like to welcome our new colleagues, the Ambassadors of Chile, New Zealand and the United Kingdom.

The fundamental changes which have occurred in international security following the end of the cold war have made possible outstanding success in disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation.

In September 1992 the Conference on Disarmament reported the Chemical Weapons Convention to the United Nations General Assembly. On 29 April 1997 this Convention, which provides for an effectively verifiable ban of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction, entered into force.

Last year this Conference successfully concluded negotiations on a Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty - a long sought-after goal in the history of arms control.

Both achievements have demonstrated the CD's capacity to succeed in complex negotiations. While the post-cold-war era offers unique opportunities for strengthening international security and stability in an environment of globalization, cooperation and growing interdependence of States, we still face a number of risks. It is a world fraught with regional conflicts, convulsive nationalism, ethnic strife and terrorism. Huge conventional arsenals and considerable stocks of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery entail a persistent risk of proliferation. Thus, the disarmament process has not yet come to an end - it is facing new daunting challenges.

In nuclear disarmament important progress has been achieved, but much remains to be done. Germany welcomes the agreement reached by President Clinton and President Yeltsin during their March 1997 Helsinki summit. We also welcome the agreement reached between the United States of America and Russia concerning the demarcation between tactical and strategic missile defence. We hope that this agreement will facilitate early ratification of START II by the Russian Duma so that START III negotiations

(Mr. Seibert, Germany)

can begin without delay, aiming at reductions in deployed strategic warheads to 2,000 to 2,500 by 31 December 2007. This would bring strategic nuclear arsenals down to 20 per cent of the highest cold war levels and would be a major step towards the ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Attempting to interfere with the bilateral nuclear disarmament process, which is well under way, would not yield any benefits for the CD; nor would it be productive to set specific time limits for the process of nuclear disarmament.

We do believe, however, that nuclear disarmament is an important issue which the CD must be able to address with a view to encouraging progress and to identifying issues that could be the subject of multilateral negotiations.

The Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty and the constraints it imposes on the development and qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons is an example of the substantial contribution the CD can make to the wider process of nuclear disarmament. The next logical step overdue is the negotiation and successful conclusion by the CD of a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). Both resolution 48/75 L, adopted unanimously by the United Nations General Assembly, and the decision by the 1995 NPT Review Conference on "Principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament" called for early cut-off negotiations. Germany remains committed to the prompt commencement of negotiations on an FMCT which should end for ever the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and make a significant contribution to the process of nuclear disarmament as well as to the strengthening of nuclear non-proliferation. Such a treaty should be effectively verifiable, non-discriminatory and universally applicable. Full-scope safeguards under international supervision should apply to nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States alike.

After intensive consultations by Ambassador Shannon, the CD reached consensus in 1995 on a mandate for cut-off negotiations. It is flexible enough to permit addressing the security concerns expressed by the members of this Conference and thus provides a solid basis for negotiations.

This brings me to another urgent issue which is high on the international agenda both as a humanitarian concern and as a disarmament measure - a ban on anti-personnel landmines (APLs). Germany is deeply concerned by the human suffering caused by the proliferation of APLs. We vigorously support international efforts to combat and resolve the landmine problem. In 1996 Germany completely renounced APLs and imposed an unlimited export moratorium on such weapons. By the end of 1997 all German APL stocks will have been destroyed.

In summer 1996 Federal Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel launched a seven-point action programme on APLs which was welcomed by more than 100 States. Germany is also committed to the EU Joint Action on APLs of October 1996, which aims at a total ban on APLs at the earliest possible date, a comprehensive export moratorium on all types of APLs and increased financial support for international mine-clearing activities.

(Mr. Seibert, Germany)

Now the time has come for negotiations to implement United Nations General Assembly resolution 51/45 S adopted by an overwhelming majority of 156 States. Germany is fully committed to the Ottawa Process including its landmarks, the Brussels Declaration and the Oslo Diplomatic Conference, which will hopefully lead to the signing of a convention totally banning the production, stockpiling, use and trading of APLs before the end of this year.

At the same time, Germany is convinced that the CD, with its long-standing experience and know-how as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiation forum, can and should make a major contribution to solving the APLs problem.

From the very outset we have held the view that the Ottawa Process and work within the CD should be complementary, that is, mutually consistent and reinforcing. Both tracks should be directed towards the paramount goal of a comprehensive and effective ban on APLs. In this context we see a significant role for the CD in making a substantial contribution towards ensuring the universality of an APL ban.

While we are aware that the CD may not be in a position to reach this objective in a single negotiating effort, it has the capacity to achieve results with universal effect.

We welcome and support Ambassador Campbell's discharging of his duties as Special Coordinator on APLs. We hope that after the signature of a convention on APLs in Ottawa, which is scheduled to take place before the end of this year, the stage can be set for the CD to establish an ad hoc group and to adopt a negotiating mandate on APLs at the very outset of next year's session.

The CD cannot produce a spectacular success such as last year's CTBT every year. Sometimes a period of reflection may be needed. But as this year's session is drawing to an end, we cannot be but disappointed by its results. Too much time is being expended with too little result. Despite its numerous formal and informal meetings, the Conference is not being perceived by our publics as the productive multilateral forum it should be. As a consequence, the CD is facing an increasing credibility problem. Against this background, we welcome the appointment of four Special Coordinators and fully support their work. We attach particular importance to improving the functioning of this Conference, including the updating of its agenda.

We do see a continuing need to examine how we can make our working methods more effective. In particular, given the monthly rotating Chair, we think there is an objective need to strengthen the role and function of the CD presidency. Certain concrete steps to this end would make it easier for the CD President to carry out his tasks and would, at the same time, lie in the interest of all of us. More effective working methods are necessary now, and even more so when the CD envisages further expansion of its membership.

We also believe that an update of our traditional CD agenda has to reflect the international changes and resulting challenges. We therefore think that the time is ripe for negotiations on an FMCT and a ban on APLs.

(Mr. Seibert, Germany)

Consultations so far have, however shown that we will probably not be able to reach consensus by the end of this session on any of the subjects under review. Special Coordinators should therefore be permitted to pursue their work during the inter-sessional period with a view to presenting their reports at the beginning of next year's session.

Mr. President, my delegation places full trust in your leadership and determination to move this Conference forward. Its credibility will largely depend on whether it can rise to the challenge of engaging in substantive negotiations on a ban on the production of fissile material and on anti-personnel landmines. The Conference has proven in the past that it can meet such challenges and resolve problems if there is political will. We have full confidence that you and the succeeding Swedish presidency will spare no effort to prepare the ground - also during the inter-sessional period - so that substantive negotiations can begin at the outset of next year's session.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Germany for his statement and for his kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Iraq, Ambassador Al-Tikriti.

Mr. AL-TIKRITI (Iraq) (translated from Arabic): Mr. President, allow me first of all to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament at such a crucial stage of its history. We are confident that your competence, wisdom and experience will help to overcome the difficulties impeding our work. I would like to commend your predecessor, Her Excellency the distinguished Ambassador of Slovakia, who discharged her responsibilities in a convincing and objective manner, and I would also like to welcome our colleagues, the new Ambassadors, who have assumed their duties at the Conference. I wish to assure them that my country's delegation will cooperate with them in a highly diligent and responsible manner.

Mr. President, my country's delegation listened with great attention to your opening statement at the plenary meeting on 21 August 1997, in which you described in an honest and realistic manner the uncomfortable situation that has prevailed during this year's session. However, your optimistic expectations for the coming session have created the hope of surmounting the difficulties which are impeding the accomplishment of further achievements in this forum in order to make changes and contemplate open-mindedly what has to be done in this Conference, which enjoys the trust and confidence of the international community in matters of disarmament.

Needless to say, important and sensitive issues require time for thorough deliberation, an exchange of views and consultation in order to take appropriate, practical and realistic decisions on the important issues facing the Conference. Nevertheless, this should not be used by some parties as a means to sidetrack issues of great importance to the majority and weaken efforts exerted to reach solutions to the outstanding questions which the Conference has failed to resolve at its 1997 session. In this respect, a well-known saying could apply: "If you leave food too long on the fire, you will certainly burn it". Therefore we urge the Conference to be aware of the time element, which might not be in our favour.

(Mr. Al-Tikriti, Iraq)

Unfortunately, there appears to be a widespread feeling that some parties in the Conference are trying to block any progress in its work and keep it bogged down in prolonged debates, which sometimes seem to be sterile and pointless. While we appreciate the preoccupations and concerns of others, in our present-day world there are several priorities that cannot be disregarded or overlooked, because they represent a common goal for the whole of mankind, namely the total and final elimination of the nuclear threat. The experience of this year's session constitutes a discouraging and disappointing precedent. The session will end in two weeks' time, and the Conference has failed to resolve even the procedural matters and has not yet begun to discuss any of the substantive issues. There is no indication of flexibility on the questions of high priority which we have already mentioned.

Too much time has been spent on unproductive debates concerning issues on the Conference's agenda, and the positions of member States have become obvious both individually and within geographical and political groups. I would like to ask you: hasn't the time come to take the appropriate decision to begin our work seriously in order to make up for what we have already lost and accomplish at least part of what is expected of us?

My country's delegation, by raising this question at this very time two weeks before the end of this year's session, is inviting the Conference to make use of the inter-sessional period to endeavour to prepare the way for the commencement of substantive work at the beginning of 1998.

The central question facing the Conference is not whether there are further tasks to be fulfilled to ensure more stable and sustainable security for mankind; it is rather the identification of the issues to be negotiated with a view to achieving or approaching this goal, and the manner in which the negotiating process should be organized in order to enable us to achieve appropriate and realistic objectives that take into consideration the interests and concerns of all in an unbiased and democratic way. This Conference will remain the principal forum for negotiations aiming at concluding international agreements on disarmament issues, first and foremost among which is nuclear disarmament, which should remain at the top of the Conference's agenda. Hence, the nuclear-weapon States should shoulder their responsibilities in this respect since they have a special obligation under the provisions of the NPT and the document on principles and objectives adopted by the 1995 Review Conference of the States Parties to the NPT.

We noted a glimmer of hope in the statements made by some delegations at the last plenary meeting, and we could develop and build on this hope. Although some delegations wish to rephrase or delete parts of the agenda items for serious consultation without prejudice to the purely substantive issues, nuclear disarmament remains a priority for my country's delegation as well as for the Group of 21, of which Iraq is a member. This item represents a priority for us because of its importance to the international community as a whole. We believe that the priority for this Conference is total nuclear disarmament, as was made clear by my country's delegation in its statement in the plenary meeting on 14 August 1997. This is a wide-ranging and delicate issue which should be dealt with in a realistic manner. We therefore support the view that parallel steps should be taken to achieve the ultimate goal,

(Mr. Al-Tikriti, Iraq)

namely the elimination of nuclear weapons, by, for example, re-establishing the Ad Hoc Committee on Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space. Realizing the sensitivity of nuclear disarmament and pending the achievement of this goal, we would like to reiterate the need to provide the non-nuclear-weapon States with assurances that nuclear weapons will not be used against them and that they will not be threatened with the use of such weapons. We therefore urge the Conference to re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee on assurances at its coming session, as well as the Ad Hoc Committee on Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space, and my country's delegation is flexible with regard to the rephrasing of the title of this item.

My country's delegation listened a short while ago to the reports of the four Special Coordinators, and we would like to express to them our gratitude and appreciation for their constructive work and the considerable efforts and extensive consultations they have undertaken in a very transparent manner. My country's delegation has expressed its position with regard to the various issues under discussion. The rules of procedure state that the mandate of the Coordinators should be terminated after the presentation of their final reports. We therefore propose that it might be preferable to renew the mandates of the four distinguished Coordinators at the beginning of the next session in 1998 in order to enable them to continue their constructive work and not to waste more time next year. I believe that some of the Coordinators have put forward this idea in one way or another.

Finally, before concluding its statement, my country's delegation wishes to reaffirm its readiness to cooperate and coordinate both within the Group of 21 and with the Conference as a whole.

The PRESIDENT I thank the representative of Iraq for his statement and for his kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Chile.

Mr. ILLANES (Chile): With your permission, Sir, I will read a statement which has been submitted to the CD on behalf of Poland and Chile concerning the subject of anti-personnel landmines and the Conference on Disarmament. It says:

> "We express our recognition and support to the objectives of humanitarian nature pursued by the 'Ottawa Process' which encompasses the concern of the international community for eliminating anti-personnel landmines, thus reducing the great number of innocent people who fall every year a victim of this type of weapons.
>
> "We think that the convention which, as an outcome of this process, will be adopted by the Oslo Conference, would contribute to the achievement of this noble objective.
>
> "At the same time we are convinced that the subject of anti-personnel landmines includes important aspects which can best be addressed by the specialized negotiating forum of the Conference on Disarmament.

(Mr. Illanes, Chile)

"We believe that the Conference on Disarmament, through the consideration and negotiation of agreements complementary to, consistent with and mutually supportive of the one to be concluded in Ottawa, can make a significant contribution to reaching the goals of the United Nations on this matter.

"We agree that achieving universal support for such a goal should be a paramount objective, the attainment of which is possible through a negotiating process in which due consideration can be given to national security concerns of involved parties.

"It was with this in mind that we made a proposal to the Conference, on 27 March 1997, that led to the appointment of a Special Coordinator to hold consultations on a possible mandate for negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament on the question of anti-personnel landmines. We commend him for his diligent work so far. Given the short period which he has had available for his consultations, and the need to take account of work proceeding on this issue outside the Conference on Disarmament, it is clear that he will not be in a position to present his final recommendations to the Conference before the end of this year's session. We would, therefore, strongly support the continuation of his consultations during the inter-sessional period and the presentation of a final report at the start of the 1998 session of the Conference on Disarmament."

This ends the statement, and allow me to add one word to say that this specific reference I have made to the report of the Special Coordinator, Ambassador Campbell, does not in any manner imply that we do not attach the same importance to the very valuable reports of the other Coordinators, the distinguished Ambassadors of Egypt, Austria and Hungary. Indeed, they all deserve the sincere appreciation and careful consideration of the CD. They are the fruit of intensive and intelligent labour, and they cast valuable light on complex issues which, as they have all explained today, would need further consultation and study.

Mr. DUARTE (Brazil): Mr. President, first of all, I wish to congratulate you on behalf of the Brazilian delegation on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference. You can count on our full cooperation in the discharge of your duties. Let me also thank your predecessor, Ambassador Mária Krasnohorská, for her able conduct of CD business during her tenure. I wish also to thank the Special Coordinators for they comprehensive reports.

Allow me to refer specifically to the report of the Special Coordinator on improved and effective functioning, Ambassador Zahran of Egypt. We see great value in his report, which covers extensively and in detail the various and delicate subjects considered during several rounds of informal consultations we held this session. We recognize the limitations of the assessments contained therein, both in terms of them binding only him as Special Coordinator and of the recommendation that the CD continue consultations on improved and effective functioning next session. However, I need to make a clarification with regard to one point. Given the views

(Mr. Duarte, Brazil)

expressed by my delegation on the specific question of non-governmental organizations' participation in CD work and the statement contained in paragraph 12 of the first heading of his report, in which it is stated that NGO participation in CD negotiations was ruled out, I should make it clear that this position does not correspond to the point of view of my delegation. The inclusion of this phrase in the report, unqualified as it is and under a heading whereby a better understanding seems to be detected on certain issues, should not be misconstrued as representing our opinion on this specific question. Conversely, we do look forward to further consultations on greater involvement of NGOs in the work of the Conference, as referred to in paragraph 4 of the second heading of his report.

Ms. VUORENPÄÄ (Finland): First I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, for the assumption of your demanding task and assure you of the full cooperation and support of the delegation of Finland.

Finland would like to thank the four Special Coordinators for their comprehensive reports. We consider it important that they can continue their work. In this context I would like to make a special reference to the report of Ambassador Campbell. As in the statement of the Ambassador of Chile, Finland would like to commend Ambassador Campbell for his diligent work so far. It is important that he continue his intensive consultations in the inter-sessional period. It is equally important that the members of the CD support him in his work. We also propose that the CD, in its report to the General Assembly, clearly indicate its wish to continue dealing expeditiously with the issue of APLs right from the beginning of its next session in January 1998.

Mr. ULUÇEVIK (Turkey): Mr. President, since this is the first time that my delegation is taking the floor under your able presidency, I would like to congratulate you upon your assumption of this high office. I assure you of my delegation's full and constructive support and cooperation. I wish also to commend your predecessor, Ambassador Krasnohorská of Slovakia, for her outstanding performance as President. Moreover, it gives me pleasure to welcome in our midst Ambassador Javier Illanes of Chile, Ambassador Clive Pearson of New Zealand and Ambassador Ian Soutar of the United Kingdom.

As we have stated on behalf of the Turkish Government, for the record, on a number of previous occasions, my Government sees the CD as the most appropriate body to deal with the subject of APLs. Therefore, my delegation associates itself with the statement which has just been made by the distinguished Ambassador of Chile, particularly with its first subparagraph of paragraph 3, which reads as follows:

> "At the same time, we are convinced that the subject of anti-personnel landmines includes important aspects which can be best addressed by the specialized negotiating forum of the Conference on Disarmament."

We also share the view expressed in the said statement to the effect that in a negotiating process on APLs, due consideration should be given to the national security concerns of involved parties.

(Mr. Ulçevik, Turkey)

I should also like to take this opportunity to commend and thank Ambassador Mounir Zahran of Egypt, Special Coordinator on the improved and effective functioning of the Conference, Ambassador Kreid of Austria, Special Coordinator on the expansion of membership, Ambassador Náray of Hungary, Special Coordinator on the agenda, Ambassador Campbell of Australia, Special Coordinator on anti-personnel landmines, for their respective comprehensive reports.

As to the report of Ambassador Campbell of Australia on the APLs, my delegation will favourably consider his recommendations. We are of the opinion that in order to enable the Conference to make a smooth start to its work next year, inter-sessional work needs to be done by the Special Coordinator on APLs. With this in mind, and also judging from the statements and recommendations of all four distinguished Special Coordinators, we believe that there is a need for them to continue their respective work and consultations in 1998. Therefore, my delegation favourably considers the idea of extending the mandates of all Special Coordinators.

Mr. ISTRATE (Romania): Mr. President, it is a particular pleasure for me to congratulate you, on behalf of the Romanian delegation, on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and wish you every success in the fulfilment of your mandate, as we approach the final stage of our work this session, with the preparation of the report to the United Nations General Assembly already under way.

I have asked for the floor today in order to express the Romanian Government's support for the statement just delivered on behalf of Chile and Poland.

Romania is deeply concerned about the worsening of the humanitarian crisis provoked by the indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines. We are therefore committed to contributing to the efforts aimed at coping with the global scourge of anti-personnel landmines towards the eventual elimination of these horrendous weapons. As an expression of that policy, my country voted in favour of United Nations General Assembly resolution 51/45 S, entitled "An international agreement to ban anti-personnel landmines". In practical terms, Romania has observed, since 1995, a unilateral export moratorium on APLs, a measure which the Government intends to extend for a new three-year period. Apart from that, we expressed readiness to continue contributing to ongoing demining activities, as well as in terms of medical assistance to APL victims.

My country follows with interest the search for a solution to the sufferings and damage caused by landmines, undertaken by various international initiatives, in particular the "Ottawa Process". Along with the co-sponsors of today's statement on APLs, we hope that the convention which is to be concluded in December in that framework will represent a significant step forward on the road towards eliminating landmines for ever.

It is our considered view that the Conference on Disarmament, as the sole multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament of the international community, cannot stay outside the ever-growing trend of action against landmines. Participation in these efforts has increasingly become a question

(Mr. Istrate, Romania)

of credibility and relevance for our Conference. The Conference on Disarmament is a forum with large representation and valuable expertise. Acting complementarily with the "Ottawa Process", it could bring an invaluable contribution to the universal acceptance of a ban on APLs.

From this perspective, my country welcomed the appointment of a Special Coordinator to consult on a possible mandate for negotiations in the CD on the question of landmines. While congratulating Ambassador Campbell of Australia for the results achieved so far, we fully support the view that he needs more time to accomplish his mandate. It appears therefore necessary that the Conference request Ambassador Campbell to continue consulting delegations during the inter-sessional period and present a report by the beginning of the 1998 session.

Mr. ORFI (Syrian Arab Republic) (translated from Arabic): Thank you, Mr. President. My delegation did not intend to take the floor at this meeting. Therefore, I shall save my congratulations to you for a future meeting. My delegation requested the floor in order to comment on the request by one of the Special Coordinators. However, it seems that His Excellency the Ambassador of Nigeria, the Coordinator of the Group of 21, has asked for the floor in order to present the position of the Group on this issue. Therefore I would prefer to let His Excellency the Ambassador of Nigeria speak.

Mr. HAYASHI (Japan): Mr. President, let me join previous speakers in congratulating you on the assumption of the presidency. My delegation has listened to the reports delivered by the four Special Coordinators with enthusiasm and admiration. All of them are very well thought out and certainly give hope to our shared sentiment that the CD should start substantive work.

Our delegation shares every point mentioned in the statement by the Chilean Ambassador, and thanks both Chile and Poland for their contribution in this respect. As has been stated and announced in Tokyo, my Government is going to Oslo as a full participant, and this is in order to support the noble endeavours of the Ottawa Process. We also share the view that the CD can make a significant contribution to reaching the goals of the United Nations on the issue of anti-personnel landmines. Concerning the Special Coordinator on anti-personnel landmines, considering the circumstances in which the Special Coordinator had to work, my delegation supports Chile and Poland and sincerely hopes that the CD will decide to allow him to continue his consultations during the inter-sessional period and to present a report at the first part of the 1998 session of the CD.

Mr. BOUCHAARA (Morocco) (translated from French): Mr. President, my delegation would in its turn like to extend its sincere congratulations to you on taking over the presidency of this Conference. It would also like to thank the four Special Coordinators for the considerable amount of work which they have accomplished. I would like to make a brief comment on the report of the Special Coordinator on anti-personnel mines. The delegation of Morocco takes note of the recommendations made by Ambassador Campbell of Australia, but is somewhat surprised at the tone of these recommendations. It would like to reiterate that no decision on the extension of a special coordinator's mandate

(Mr. Bouchaara, Morocco)

can be taken before consultations have been carried out and consent secured from capitals. I hope that I have been sufficiently clear on this score and that I have been understood.

Mr. SOUTAR (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): I wish to make two observations, one relating to the reports of the Special Coordinators and one relating to the statement by Chile and Poland. First of all, I should like to thank the Special Coordinators for their thoughtful and thought-provoking reports. Although, rightly, each was issued upon the author's own authority, I found them, returning as I am to the Conference after an absence of some years, a valuable introduction to the current state of thinking within the Conference on the areas we cover. I believe they bring out those areas where there is some prospect of reaching a measure of agreement and those areas where positions may be somewhat further apart. I think it is clear from the reports that the work of the Special Coordinators is not yet at an end. This does not, I suggest, reflect on their personal abilities, rather on the limited time available to them to carry out their work. Ambassador Seibert of Germany spoke of the Special Coordinators being permitted to continue work in the inter-sessional period. I would venture to go perhaps a little further and suggest that the Special Coordinators might actively be encouraged to do so.

I might come now to the statement made in the name of Chile and Poland. I wish to say that my Government wishes to associate itself with the sentiments expressed in that statement. My Government is fully committed to the Ottawa Process. I hope next week to have the honour of leading our delegation to the conference in Oslo, but I hope in due course, assuming a successful outcome for the Ottawa Process, to return to the Conference to take up the subject within the framework of the CD, and specifically, with reference to the statement by Chile and Poland, I would wish to support the request of Ambassador Campbell that he should continue his consultations during the inter-sessional period and to present us with a final report at the start of the 1998 session.

Mr. DACHO (Slovakia): Mr. President, may I congratulate you on the assumption of your responsible function and assure you of my delegation's full support? We are sure that with your vast experience and diplomatic skills you will steer this body to a successful conclusion of its annual session. Allow me to thank the previous speakers for their kind words addressed to Ambassador Krasnohorská. I should also like to express my delegation's deep gratitude to the Special Coordinators, whose diligent work has enabled us today to profit from their respective reports. I should like to emphasize our deep appreciation for their great effort. We shall study their reports with due attention. Among many interesting facts and conclusions, all the Special Coordinators have mentioned that the time span provided for their work had been very limited and directly or indirectly stated the need for further consultations. They also recommended that the CD continue consultations during the inter-sessional period or during the next annual session. I did not intend to speak today, but this brings me to the other part of my short intervention.

(Mr. Dacho, Slovakia)

Slovakia continues to support actively all initiatives aimed at the achievement of a ban on anti-personnel landmines. At this point, I should like to mention that Slovakia is a full participant in the Ottawa Process. The Slovak authorities consider the CD and the Ottawa Process complementary. The delegation to the CD has therefore been instructed to support all activities in this direction. We share the view that present activities should be aimed at creating the conditions for an immediate opening of negotiations on anti-personnel landmines at the 1998 CD session. We also believe that unlike the Ottawa Process, the CD can take into consideration different security aspects and make, in this way, a significant contribution to the ultimate goal of the elimination of anti-personnel landmines. The ultimate objective of the negotiations in the CD should be to produce a typical disarmament treaty through a gradual process, if necessary. At the same time, we should unequivocally state that the Ottawa Process and the CD negotiations have the potential of being mutually supportive and reinforcing.

This brings me to the conclusion of my brief intervention, but I should like to add the voice of the Slovak delegation to the previous speakers who spoke in favour of the extension of the mandate of the Special Coordinator on anti-personnel landmines, the distinguished Ambassador John Campbell of Australia, with a view to enabling him to continue consultations in order to complete his task and submit to the CD a report during the first part of the 1998 session. In other words, I should also like to associate Slovakia with the joint statement by Chile and Poland. We would be equally ready to consider and support the extension of the other Special Coordinators' mandates at an appropriate time.

Mr. ANDREEV (Bulgaria): Mr. President, allow me at the outset to offer you the congratulations of my delegation upon the assumption of your important duties. We would also like to thank Ambassador Krasnohorská, who preceded you in the Chair.

I shall be very brief today. We did not intend to take the floor. We have listened with great interest and attention to the reports which have been presented by the Special Coordinators here, and we would like to thank them for the very deep and detailed work that has been done. My Government would like to associate itself with the statement presented by the distinguished Ambassador of Chile on behalf of his country and Poland. It has been a long-standing position of Bulgaria that the CD provides the most appropriate expertise to elaborate multilateral instruments in the very important field of disarmament. At the same time, my country is fully committed to the Ottawa Process, to the spirit and goals of the Ottawa Process, and we feel that the Ottawa Process and the CD are two forums which complement each other rather than compete. Consequently, we support the request to prolong the mandate of Ambassador Campbell in order to allow him to present the final report on the anti-personnel landmines issue at the beginning of next year's session of the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. ABUAH (Nigeria): I should like to join the previous speakers in extending our gratitude to the Special Coordinators for the reports they have just rendered on the assignment given to them by the Conference. Obviously,

(Mr. Abuah, Nigeria)

one needs to recall that the decision of the Conference to appoint the Special Coordinators was taken on 26 June. It was barely two months ago. Is it not astonishing that the Special Coordinators themselves have been able to produce the kind of synthesis of ideas which we have had this morning? They need our support, but it seems to me that we are barred, at this stage, by the rules of procedure. A mandate of the Special Coordinators is set within the framework of the 1997 Conference session. Now, as indeed Ambassador John Campbell said a moment ago when he made his statement, because of lack of time - and this is obvious and is very clear - he would want to have more time to complete his work. We in the Group of 21 feel that the matter should be considered in the context of the 1998 work of the Conference on Disarmament. In the course of the adoption of the agenda and programme of work of the Conference in 1998, we have heard discussions and comments made about possible consultations inter-sessionally in 1997. The CD is of course capable of taking a decision in this regard, but we feel that if the mandate lapses with the end of the 1997 session, it would be extremely difficult for the Special Coordinators to conduct inter-sessional consultations. At any rate, the Group of 21 would like to ask for a deferment of a decision on this matter to allow for more consultations. The coordinators of the other groups are very clear in their own minds about the position of the Group of 21 on this very question. This matter has been discussed on several occasions at the Presidential consultations. So there is no element of surprise at the point that was just made about the position of the Group of 21. So I do hope that the Conference will bear with us.

Mr. ZHU (China) (translated from Chinese): The Chinese delegation did not originally intend to speak but, having heard many speakers, it wishes to make a few points.

As regards the work of the four Special Coordinators, we think there are some points on which everyone agrees. First, the Coordinators have all worked conscientiously and done a great deal, though three of them have operated differently from the fourth, conducting open-ended consultations while the remaining one has conducted bilateral consultations. The second point of agreement is that none of the four has completed his job. As regards the jobs themselves, the Coordinators all believe that the work must continue. Then there is another point - though a minor one - namely that all four Coordinators were appointed at the same time. From the logical point of view, given that their jobs are not completed, they must of course continue with their work. From the logical point of view again, since the Coordinators were all appointed at the same time and they have difficult jobs to do, no one has disagreed with what they have been doing, and we have no reason to change any of them. I am talking from the logical point of view. But the question is, when should these four Coordinators continue with their work? During the inter-sessional period, or when the next session begins? This is not a new question: it has cropped up many times before. I think it is a question that must be resolved on the basis of the actual situation. When this session ends, the Conference will naturally not have anything to do. But everyone knows that work on biological weapons will resume right away, and then there is the General Assembly. By then, in the circumstances, I am afraid, not everybody will be here. So working effectively during the inter-sessional period will, I fear, be hard. A second question is, should the subsequent

(Mr. Sha, China)

work of the four Special Coordinators be considered in conjunction with the agenda and programme of work for the next session of the Conference? They would seem to be related. The Chinese delegation believes the whole situation must be taken into account. Now, within this framework, I should like to say a word or two about anti-personnel landmines.

There appear to be three forums for discussing the APL issue. One is the "Ottawa Process"; the second, for the sake of argument, we can call the "CD process". The third is the "Certain Conventional Weapons process". I fear that the Ottawa and CD processes differ in their very nature. Are they mutually supportive, mutually complementary? It is hard to say. Of course we hope so, or we used to - but now it is hard to say. Of course, one thing we can say is that they affect each other. Everyone remembers that towards the end of the second part of the session, many States said the Conference must get down to work - meaning that it should swiftly appoint a special coordinator for anti-personnel mines and draw up a mandate for him. That gave people the impression that the discussions on the mandate would be concluded in the third part of the session so that negotiations could start by the first part of next year's CD session. The Chinese delegation's position on APLs is crystal clear. I explained it thoroughly at our June session. We stated then that, out of respect for many States' wishes and to demonstrate our flexibility, we would agree to appoint a coordinator and commence work. As everyone will also recall, a month or so later - at the start of the third part of the session - some of the same countries said there was no need for precipitate action to deal with the question of APLs: the Conference should await the completion of the Ottawa Process. I am not quoting word for word, but many countries said something of the sort. During the second part of the session those countries had been propelling the work of CD forward very positively. The Chinese delegation regards this as an important change. What does it mean? Has something happened over the past month or so? Frankly, honestly, we do not understand. But given this change, the Chinese delegation will have to consider and review whether, next year, the Special Coordinator should or should not continue work on the question of APLs.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): First of all, Mr. President, it is my pleasant duty to convey the warm felicitations and sense of satisfaction of the Pakistan delegation at seeing you assume the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. This office comes to representatives to the CD in accordance with the turn of the wheel of fortune. It seems that this month the wheel of fortune has moved faster than normal. That is not unconnected with the discussions that we are having here this morning. But in any case, it is a befitting culmination of an outstanding tour of duty which you have had in Geneva, and I and many of your colleagues wish to acknowledge and pay you great tribute for these accomplishments. It is also my duty to express our satisfaction at the successful and eventful presidency of your predecessor, Ambassador Krasnohorská. She was able to achieve what has escaped the fingers of several of her predecessors. I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome our new colleagues, Ambassador Illanes of Chile, Ambassador Pearson of New Zealand and Ambassador Soutar of the United Kingdom.

We have heard the reports of the four Special Coordinators this morning, and my delegation will study those comments very carefully, but at this stage,

(Mr. Akram, Pakistan)

I would like to offer some brief comments on some of these reports. Firstly, we believe that Ambassador Zahran's report on improved and effective functioning is a thoughtful paper, which reflects the rich discussion that was held on this issue, and we would like to commend him in particular for the open and transparent manner in which those consultations were held. It must be noted, however, and we hope that our report to the General Assembly will note, that the working methods of the Conference are not the problem. But we can continue to work to improve our effectiveness.

As regards expansion, we agreed that there is no consensus yet, but perhaps our report should reaffirm that the observer States in the Conference on Disarmament have never had any difficulties in participating as fully as they wish in the work of the Conference, and I believe that those of them who remain interested in the work of the Conference will continue to participate actively in this work.

On the agenda and work programme, Ambassador Náray's report, we believe, reflects much of the ground which was covered by his predecessor, and we continue to hold to the view that the only consensus that exists on the international priorities for disarmament are reflected in the Final Document of the first special session.

Turning to the question of anti-personnel landmines, one is hesitant to make subs'antive comments on what has become a sort of a shell game: today here, tomorrow elsewhere. My delegation was the first to propose the establishment of the Special Coordinator on 30 January 1997, and I would like to say that we were happy when the Special Coordinator was finally appointed with the active support of many interested and relevant delegations. But it is difficult to follow a process where one does not know what the object is. I would say to those who wish to negotiate in the CD, which we believe is the relevant forum, that they must make up their minds whether they wish to run with the hares or hunt with the hounds. We believe the CD is the relevant forum, but the effort to open negotiations in the CD must be pursued with the seriousness that it deserves, not with vacillation and confusion. Ambassador Campbell has in his statement stated his impressions. I would note that he has consulted over 55 delegations of the 61 members of this Conference. Unfortunately, he did not get around to the delegation of Pakistan. Perhaps this was because there is the impression that we do not possess anti-personnel landmines, or perhaps because it is felt that there is no interest on the part of the Pakistan delegation on this issue, or perhaps it is felt that we have no views on this matter. Hopefully, we will be able to correct these misapprehensions at a subsequent stage.

With regard to the proposal to extend the mandate of one or more of the Special Coordinators, I would like to reiterate that our rules of procedure envisage the termination of the officers of this Conference, except for the office of the presidency. The presidency of this Conference is the continuity between one session and the next. Therefore, while we agree that further work is required, we must find a modality to conduct such further work, whether on APLs or on other issues, through the modalities that are provided in the rules of procedure. We note of course that Ambassador Campbell himself has stated in his report that delegations "would prefer to decide on a

(Mr. Akram, Pakistan)

specific mandate [on APLs] in early 1998", and therefore the proposal for inter-sessional consultations does not possess the same urgency as would be the case if, for example, we would all determine to open negotiations in the CD and not await other events.

My delegation would like to suggest that you, Sir, as President of the Conference, should be entrusted with the authority to call for informal consultations on the issue of APLs and on any other issue that you consider relevant in the period from the end of our current session to the beginning of our 1998 session, or to the end of the year, when your presidency will end. This would allow us to get together, if circumstances arise which create the possibility for genuine negotiations on APLs in the CD. It is under those circumstances that my delegation would be very happy to join in such consultations.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Pakistan for his statement and for his kind words to me. We have five more requests for the floor, from the delegations of Venezuela, the United States of America, Argentina, Spain and Syria. I believe this list is correct, and I would now like to give the floor to the delegation of Venezuela.

Mr. CORRALES REAL (Venezuela) (translated from Spanish): First of all, Mr. President, allow me to congratulate you on your appointment as President for this session. I am not going to make a general statement but will confine myself to a comment on the subject of anti-personnel landmines, the report on the consultations which was introduced by Ambassador Campbell of Australia, whom we congratulate, along with the other Coordinators, for the work they have accomplished and the reports presented here today on the different subjects. My delegation shares the view of a large number of delegations that the Conference should consider the subject of anti-personnel landmines and of course include it on its agenda for future work. Naturally, in our view, the mandate of the Conference should be the subject of consultations and bilateral contacts, especially, and we agree with a sizeable group of delegations, under the coordination of Ambassador Campbell, the extension of whose mandate we support at this point in time. My delegation considers that progress in the proceedings of the Oslo Conference, which my country will attend, and the adoption of an instrument on this subject is going to have major repercussions on the mandate that the Conference on Disarmament might decide to have in relation to the handling of this subject in the future. We think that the Ottawa Process and the mandate of the Conference on this subject, although different arrangements because of their very nature, should be considered as complementary and compatible and in no way mutually exclusive or contradictory. My delegation, in concluding this brief declaration, wishes to express its support in general terms for the document introduced by the Ambassador of Chile on behalf of his country and Poland.

Ms. CRITTENBERGER (United States of America): As with others, it had not been the intention of my delegation to seek the floor this morning, but the discussion has been interesting, and I think we would like to make a few remarks.

(Ms. Crittenberger, United States)

On the first point, we would like to take note of the statement made by the Ambassador of Chile on behalf of Chile and Poland, and to note that this is fully consistent with those views on APLs held by my Government. Indeed, I spoke to this issue last week in plenary and I will not go into detail on those comments now I would, however, like to recall the United States support for negotiations on a global APL ban in the CD, and in that context, to note that the rationale behind that support includes the fact that many major historical APL producers and exporters have said that they will not participate in the Oslo negotiations, nor sign any treaty that results. Consequently, we are dedicated to continue our efforts to work toward a global ban in the CD on a step-by-step basis, even after the Ottawa treaty has been completed, and in that context, we have welcomed comments made over the last several months by some of those countries that will not participate in the Oslo meeting on their willingness to look into this issue in the Conference on Disarmament.

On the subject of the work of the Special Coordinators, I would like to join my voice with those of others in thanking them for their reports and for the energetic manner in which they tackled their tasks. The reports, of course, are on their own cognizance, but they offer us much valuable food for thought. As has already been noted, there is a common feature in all four reports - that there was not enough time to do enough work to enable the Coordinators to present consensus reports or definitive conclusions. Each Coordinator noted that further efforts would be required to reach that point. It has been rightly pointed out that new decisions will be required regarding any continuation of this work. Indeed, I presume that is why the Coordinators either recommended that their work continue or sought an extension of their mandates, because of their assumption that we would indeed have to take a new decision. It was not a presumption that they could continue their work without such a request.

At the same time, I wish to point out that our rules of procedure do not specifically address the question of appointments of special coordinators. This is an informal arrangement. The CD can make any working arrangements it desires, on a consensus basis. We assume, of course, that no one would wish to prevent the continuation of this valuable work, which will contribute to helping the CD make progress where it can. My delegation adds its voice to those of others that have proposed that we, the CD, decide before our session concludes how to continue this work. In our annual report to the United Nations General Assembly we could reflect those decisions, at least those we can reach at this point, on how to carry on such work. As an example, the Special Coordinator on improved and effective functioning has recommended that efforts be continued in 1998. The CD could positively reflect this recommendation in the report, as indeed has been done in past reports. I believe in 1994, for example, it was agreed in the CD to reflect in the report the extension of the work of the then Special Coordinator on improved and effective functioning for the following year. As for the work of the Special Coordinator on anti-personnel landmines, it seems to my delegation that this is relevant to tne consideration of the substantive work that the CD might undertake next year. Consequently, it is our view that the CD should decide to ask the Coordinator to continue his consultations on a possible mandate and report back to us at the outset of the 1998 session so it can be

(Ms. Crittenberger, United States)

factored into our decision-making on the substantive work the CD would undertake. I recall again that there are precedents for this kind of decision-making. Indeed, I believe in 1994 the then Canadian Ambassador Shannon, as Special Coordinator on fissile material cut-off, was asked to continue his consultations into the following year and report back, and there are other examples of this, so it would not be unprecedented for us to take a forward-looking view on what it is that we might want to do next year.

As a final remark, let me support the motion raised by the distinguished Ambassador of Pakistan that you and the next CD President should undertake efforts to consult on how we might get a jump-start to the 1998 session.

Mr. BENITEZ (Argentina) (translated from Spanish): In view of the time, I will be very brief. My delegation first of all wishes to thank the four Special Coordinators for the excellent reports that they have presented to us. As we are, in a sense, focusing on a specific debate, and time is pressing, I will go directly to the point we are discussing in one way or another, and that is to express our interest in participating in, and our commitment to the success of, the Ottawa Process, which all the delegations here understand. This, however, does not cause us to lose sight of the fact that we have always maintained that the CD has a complementary role that should be coherent and mutually supportive with the agreements we hope to reach in Oslo. Of course, this is not an isolated position on our part, but one shared with a large majority of delegations, many of them, which have spoken in the course of this morning. This is why we attach special importance to the possibility of keeping up the momentum that this subject currently enjoys after the Oslo meeting, and in that regard we view as very useful and positive the suggestion made by our Special Coordinator, Ambassador Campbell, supported of course by the statements of several delegations that have spoken during the course of this morning, to the effect that his mandate should be extended over the inter-sessional period. Certainly this also ties in with our own opinion concerning the role of special coordinators: it is our understanding that it is not in any way their task to prejudge or shape decisions, but simply to prepare the ground for the consensus which has eluded us this year, and certainly this year consensus has run faster than our will has and we have caught up with it only on rare occasions, and one of them was the very moment when we appointed those Special Coordinators.

My delegation considers that the considerations set forth by the Group of 21 in the shape of its spokesman, the Ambassador of Nigeria, are very important, and we think that the rules of procedure should be respected, but we also think that they are not sacrosanct - the rules of procedure are at the service of the work of the Conference. In that regard, we listened very carefully to the need not to prejudge the 1998 agenda, and we do not think that carrying out preparatory work to enable us to take a better decision would necessarily mean that we were prejudging such a decision. The Special Coordinators will be able to continue their work during the inter-sessional period. I can assure you that every one of our delegations will take whatever decision it deems fit at the beginning of the next session in a totally independent spirit, undoubtedly better enlightened by work which is willingly being made available to the Conference and which we should not underestimate. We also take into consideration the need to allow for consultation with

(Mr. Benítez, Argentina)

capitals, not least for this decision which we are, in a way, putting before ourselves now, to extend the mandates, and in this regard it seems to us very important that this matter should remain on the agenda for the few meetings that we still have left till the end of the year.

The Ambassador of Pakistan made a very important statement. The first thing that emerges in our view is that in the inter-sessional period Ambassador Campbell should consult the delegation of Pakistan, which of course always has a very clear view and makes a contribution which is by no means negligible. I believe that is an additional reason why Ambassador Campbell should not stop working during the inter-sessional period. As for the possibility that you, Mr. President, should take charge of the informal consultations, that would certainly be a source of great pleasure to us, but I think that it would give you extra work which possibly in the course of the coming year should normally be undertaken by the Special Coordinator. It would also be more efficient for you to make use of this possibility of continuing to apply to Ambassador Campbell during the inter-sessional period the mandate which was conferred on him.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Argentina. We still have four more requests for the floor, from Spain, Syria, France and Australia, and with your consent, given the time - it is almost 15 minutes to 1 o'clock - I would like to close the list of speakers with these four names, if that is acceptable. The representative of Pakistan has the floor.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): With all due respect, I do not think that we have a rule of procedure which allows the closure of the list of speakers. We do not know what will be said, and if it is necessary to come into the discussion, we will have to come in. So, with all due respect, I hope the statements will be brief and that it will not be necessary for additional statements to be made.

The PRESIDENT: We shall continue with the representative of Spain, to whom I now give the floor.

Mr. MARTINEZ MORCILLO (Spain) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, I shall try to heed your request and your hope that the next few statements will be as brief as possible, with an exception to that request, and that exception is to enable me to convey to you my very sincere congratulations on taking the Chair, and to wish you with the greatest sincerity every success in carrying out this task. I would also be remiss if I were not to note on this occasion the effective and skilful work performed by your predecessor, the Ambassador of Slovakia.

I wish to refer to two specific circumstances, and to try to outline a series of political consequences from my standpoint. The first circumstance I wish to refer to is the remarkable presentations that we have heard this morning from the four Special Coordinators on the specific subjects they have been dealing with. I followed their statements very carefully and I cannot fail to convey my very sincere congratulations to them for the content of each of the reports, with different styles, certainly, but I think that they all reflect the positions set out in the various discussions, and of course my

(Mr. Martínez Morcillo, Spain)

delegation can identify, in each of these reports, those points to which it had access when it participated in the open-ended consultations, both general and regional. However, without entering into further detail for the moment concerning the value of these four reports, which I underline, I would like to refer to two facts that arise out of their presentation.

The first is that these four reports come from representatives of three of the regional groups in this Conference on Disarmament. In that variety in the origin of the reports, and without in the slightest affecting their impartial and neutral character, I think I can perceive an expression of the attempt to unite positions and the attempt to arrive at a convergence of positions among the various delegations that are present in this Conference. The fact that these Special Coordinators are representing a broad range of the political positions that exist in this Conference should not be overlooked. There is an incontestable fact, a clear consequence, in the presentation of the four reports, which is that the four Special Coordinators have said for various reasons, on various grounds, that they have not had time to present and make progress in their conclusions. This political representativeness, combined with the proven impartiality of the designated Special Coordinators, would require this Conference to take a further step to keep them in their posts and thereby ensure that in due course they would be able to submit reports that will facilitate progress in the work of this Conference.

The other point to which I also wish to refer, and from which I would also like to draw political consequences, is the statement made by the Ambassador of Chile on behalf of his delegation and on behalf of the delegation of Poland. For me it is significant that this statement - and I would like to say straight away that I endorse it and associated myself with it - has been presented by a representative of the Group of 21 and therefore has been presented on behalf of a delegation in the Group of 21 and also on behalf of a delegation from the Eastern European Group, and therefore this statement also to some extent reflects an attempt to make headway in bringing together the different positions that exist in the Conference. Consequently, I too would like to underline this important characteristic which can be inferred from the statement made by the Ambassador of Chile. At the same time I would not like to miss this opportunity to say once again that my delegation associates itself with the points contained in it for two reasons. First, because there is no doubt that one of the topics that is currently a focus of world attention is the topic of mines. There is no doubt that this is one of the issues that is currently enjoying the most coverage by the mass media, but there is equally no doubt, or at least this is the view of my delegation, that the laudable objectives pursued under the "Ottawa Process" cannot be attained unless they have a counterpart that takes account of the important aspect which is also involved in the mines issue, which is the aspect, or the consequences of this in the sphere of disarmament and its impact on the national security interests and concerns of countries. Therefore my delegation fully endorses the statement made by the Ambassador of Chile, and equally, reiterating my support and my hope that this Conference will be able to renew the mandates of the four Special Coordinators, I attach special importance to the renewal of the appointment of the Ambassador of Australia because of the special characteristics attached to his case.

Mr. ORFI (Syrian Arab Republic) (translated from Arabic): Mr. President, I shall try to be brief in spite of the fact that the subjects tabled for discussion are very important. First of all, on behalf of my country's delegation, I would like to thank the four Special Coordinators for the statements they made today. We will certainly study these statements and, if necessary, comment thereon in due course. For the moment, I would like to comment on the report of the Special Coordinator, His Excellency the Ambassador of Australia.

Firstly, we believe that His Excellency the Ambassador of Australia was probably more fortunate than the other four Special Coordinators because he had a specific and clear-cut mandate. However, the statement he made today gave my delegation the impression that the Special Coordinator had exceeded this mandate. The Ambassador of Australia said in his statement that he saw his role as being

(continued in English)

"to identify both the common ground and those issues on which opinions differ, and then to attempt to come up with a proposal ...".

(continued in Arabic)

The mandate of the Special Coordinator which was specified in document CD/1466 does not give him the authority to present any proposals. The first paragraph of his mandate stipulates that his mandate is

(continued in English)

"to conduct consultations on a possible mandate on the question of anti-personnel landmines".

(continued in Arabic)

Therefore this mandate includes carrying out consultations only and presenting a report on these consultations.

Secondly, His Excellency the Ambassador of Australia has asked the Conference to extend his mandate once again so that he can present a final report. However, the third paragraph of his mandate stipulates that the Special Coordinator has to present a report as soon as possible -

(continued in English)

"an early report" -

(continued in Arabic)

and I believe that the beginning of the 1998 session cannot be described as early. Our position in the Group of 21 - and here I would like to remind the Ambassador of Spain of the fact that the Coordinator of the Group of 21 is Nigeria and not any other country, and any other country that spoke at this

(Mr. Orfi, Syrian Arab Republic)

meeting spoke only in its national capacity - was announced yesterday during the Presidential consultations and was reaffirmed today by the Coordinator of the Group of 21; namely that the Group of 21 is of the opinion that the mandates of the Special Coordinators will end on the conclusion of this year's session, that is to say on 10 September.

Now, as regards the proposal made by His Excellency the Ambassador of Pakistan, we can support such a proposal provided that the President is mandated to conduct consultations on the programme of work for the 1998 session and not specifically on landmines, because we do not understand why landmines should be accorded a special status and highlighted. The problem this year has not been landmines; it has been the fact that no agreement has been reached on an integrated programme of work. Therefore, if the mandate assigned to the President is to conduct consultations on a programme of work for the 1998 session, we can support this proposal.

Mr. PIVASSEAU (France) (translated from French): Mr. President, allow me to extend to you and the four Special Coordinators all the thanks and congratulations of the French delegation. We shall of course study these four reports with the greatest attention.

Permit me briefly to note, in connection with the report submitted by Ambassador Zahran, that my delegation is particularly pleased that he has been able to find so many areas of convergence, and that we consider that this report should guide our work next year, because it contains many useful suggestions.

Turning to the report presented by Ambassador Kreid, we admire the subtlety with which he has been able to present points for consideration on a difficult subject, and I would venture to say that, for those who know how subtle his approach is, it is clear that he has discreetly indicated a possible way out of the difficulties he faced. We will find inspiration in his report for what we have to do on this issue next year.

Ambassador Náray's report is certainly the most substantive one, and maybe, given this year's deadlock, the one on which our consultations ought to continue in the greatest depth. France hopes that the General Assembly of the United Nations will also give us some ideas on how to emerge from this deadlock.

Finally, with regard to Ambassador Campbell's report, my delegation has taken note of the comments made by many delegations on this subject. I simply wish to express our support to Ambassador Campbell, in the same way as to his three colleagues. It is the duty of all delegations to give them support because they are working for all of us, and the authority of the Special Coordinators reflects that of the Conference itself. The task which Ambassador Campbell has to carry out, which is to lead us towards a possible negotiating mandate on anti-personnel mines in this Conference under item 6 of our agenda, is an especially difficult mandate. We regret that, as his first two reports attest, a consensus has not yet taken shape on such a mandate.

(Mr. Rivasseau, France)

France has always been in the forefront of the fight against anti-personnel mines, and the measures we have taken at the national level show how serious our commitment is, leading us to renounce mines completely by the end of 1999 at the latest. It was in this context that my country decided to join the Ottawa Process, whose main provisions it is indeed already implementing at the national level. But on the eve of the opening of the Oslo conference, we have a twofold concern: we would like as many countries as possible to join us in working towards a total ban, and in particular the countries which produce or use anti-personnel mines on a large scale today. If they are not present, the efforts of the international community to reach the goal set by United Nations General Assembly resolution 51/45 S would be doomed to remain incomplete. In that spirit, we hope that the legitimate attention given to the Ottawa Process today will not conceal the scale of the task which will remain to be accomplished next year in the Conference on Disarmament. It is there that the dialogue was initiated to prepare for negotiations based on the principle of consensus; it is there that the challenge of a universal ban on anti-personnel mines needs to be taken up. My country hopes that the entire international community will recognize the reality of what has happened over the last nine months: the Ottawa Process, the work in the Conference on Disarmament and the progressive implementation of Protocol II to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects are not only complementary but are mutually reinforcing. As at least one delegation has emphasized this morning, a development here leads to repercussions elsewhere. It is in that spirit that my delegation would like to reiterate its support for Ambassador Campbell, to emphasize the priority attached to the speedy conclusion of his work. It is also in that spirit that France approves of the inspiration behind what was said by the Ambassador of Chile, as well as the idea of extending the mandate of the four Special Coordinators during the inter-sessional period. The French delegation notes that three delegations have requested time to think; this must be respected. We hope that a reply can be provided before we complete our work. It is in that spirit, finally, that we support the proposal made by the Ambassador of Pakistan in the terms in which he couched it.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of France. I have two more speakers on my list, and since we have to resume our session in the afternoon in an informal plenary meeting to consider the draft annual report, we should try to finish our meeting, if possible, within the next five minutes. I would now like to give the floor to the representative of Australia.

Mr. CAMPBELL (Australia): I am sure I spoke for my fellow Coordinators in thanking delegations for the kind words that they have used to describe the way in which we have each of us carried out our responsibilities. I must say the support and encouragement we have received is appreciated.

In response to the comments made by our distinguished colleague from Pakistan, I would like to say that the order in which I saw delegations had much more to do with their availability during the holiday months of July and August than the weight I placed on their likely contributions to my consultations. That said, I might remind him that we did have a preliminary

(Mr. Campbell, Australia)

discussion on APLs when he called on me several weeks ago to press the claims of a Pakistani national as a candidate for a high position with a certain specialized agency. However, I would like to say that it is an acknowledgement of Ambassador Akram's long experience in this body and the value that I place on his opinions and judgements that I have in a sense saved him for one of the last of my interlocutors in order more fully to discuss with him the range of opinions that I have encountered and to seek his guidance on the way he thinks I ought to proceed. As my mandate has not yet expired, I look forward to being able to do so in the near future.

With regard to the comments made by the representative of Syria, if Special Coordinators were to carry out their tasks on the terms that he described, we would not need Special Coordinators at all. We could have questionnaires or a show of hands in the plenary. My view and understanding is that Special Coordinators are appointed to try and find a constructive way out of impasses that we find ourselves in in this body. I must say that as long as I remain Special Coordinator, that is the approach that will guide my responsibilities.

Mr. MOHER (Canada): This is purely a procedural question. It has nothing to do with landmines, so everybody in the room can start breathing again. The point I would like to make is that we had rashly, as Canada, convened another meeting at 3 o'clock this afternoon. I just wanted to take a second of your time, and I apologize for that, to ask those delegations which are members of the expanded Western Group on United Nations topics to remain behind quickly, briefly after this meeting so that we can sort ourselves out, given your intention to continue in the informal plenary this afternoon. So, expanded Western Group members, two minutes at the conclusion of your meeting, and I again apologize for taking up some of your time.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): I am grateful to the distinguished Ambassador of Australia for having taken the trouble to respond to my comment. I would just like to say two things about this. Firstly, I am sure he will agree that the informal chat in which we spent a couple of minutes in passing on APLs did not constitute the consultations that he intended to hold with all delegations. Secondly, I was available throughout the months, with a very short period in Geneva for such consultations. Thirdly, the position of my delegation with respect to the question of special coordinators is not related to whether or not we were consulted. It is related to the fact that the situation has become totally murky as far as the negotiations on APLs are concerned, and I do not think I need to explain that much further. I already have perhaps said more than I should. But the situation is absolutely murky on APLs. We would like to see what happens. We will then decide how to proceed. If delegations are serious about negotiating on APLs within the Conference on Disarmament, we would like to see proof of that. We can then proceed to negotiate a mandate. Therefore, for the moment, at the present time, no consultations are required. We can all relax, do BW, do the General Assembly. Once we know what happens, then we will be in a position to consult and you, Mr. President, are in the best position, as the President of this Conference, to pick up the strings, look at the work programme, as our colleague from Syria said, and look at the issue of APLs and see where we can go next year. That is our approach, and we hope that there will be agreement on this.

The PRESIDENT: I thank you for your statement. That concludes my list of speakers for today. Does any delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? That does not seem to be the case.

We have heard the various shades of opinion with regard to the extensions of a new mandate or mandates of Special Coordinators. There were references or requests to extend the mandates. Some were of the opinion that we could do this next year. Some others thought that we should refer the matter to the capitals. There was a view that the President could hold consultations during the inter-sessional period. And finally, Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of 21, stated that a decision on this matter should be deferred to enable that particular group to hold consultations.

Taking into consideration the manner in which we take decisions in this forum, I believe we have to give ourselves a little bit of time for further consultations. Also, I have noted the point made by one delegation, at least, that we had worked inter-sessionally in the past, on one or two occasions, but in fact what we have to bear in mind here is whether there is consensus to entrust that kind of function to the Special Coordinator or Coordinators to undertake such work inter-sessionally, whether there is a consensus in this regard. Since we are going to meet informally this afternoon, perhaps we can give ourselves a little bit of time and think about it and come back with our own views.

Before adjourning the meeting, I should like to inform you that, in view of the late hour, the informal plenary meeting to start the consideration of the draft annual report, as contained in document CD/WP.489, will be held this afternoon at 3 p.m. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held next Thursday, 4 September 1997, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.777
4 September 1997

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-SEVENTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 4 September 1997, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Goonetilleke (Sri Lanka)

GE.97-64137 (E)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 777th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the outset, I should like, on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf, to extend a warm welcome to the newly appointed representative of Poland, Ambassador Krzysztof Jakubowski, who is attending the Conference for the first time today. Before joining the Conference, Ambassador Jakubowski held important functions in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including the post of Under-Secretary of State. I am sure that his wide experience in United Nations matters in general and disarmament in particular will be a valuable asset to this Conference. I wish to assure him of our full cooperation and support.

I should also like to welcome the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel, Ambassador Eitan Bentsur, who will be our first speaker for today.

In addition to the representative of Israel, I have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of Ireland, Indonesia and, I believe, Australia.

I now give the floor to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel, Ambassador Eitan Bentsur.

Mr. BENTSUR (Israel): Mr. President, let me begin by congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. With your long experience, we are assured of skilful steering of the work of the Conference, as it moves towards the General Assembly. At the same time, I would like to express our thanks to your predecessor, Ambassador Mária Krasnohorská of Slovakia. I also take the opportunity to acknowledge and express our appreciation to the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, and to his deputy, Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, for their effective support.

In days of old, the prophets of Israel gave voice to the message of universal peace and disarmament, to which the Jewish people have held fast and which is now Israel's heritage.

> "They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks, nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, nor shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree, and none shall make them afraid" (Micah, chap. 4, verses 3-4).

The goal to which Israel constantly aspires is to live in a region where comprehensive and lasting relations of peace prevail, based on reconciliation between peoples, good-neighbourliness, open borders, and trust among nations.

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Israel wishes to see the whole region come around to these fundamental principles and norms, which should govern relations between States and have been the backbone of transition from war and conflict to peace and reconciliation in other regions.

An agreement on these principles and norms in our region will provide a catalyst to the peace process and, moreover, pave the way for arms control and regional security arrangements.

The basis for coexistence between Israel and Arab States was laid in the peace treaties between Israel and its Egyptian and Jordanian neighbours. The Madrid Conference, to which I had the honour of contributing, also bears the special emblem of the "pioneers of peace", to whom the present Government of Israel is direct heir.

Mutual Israeli-Palestinian recognition and the firm commitment of the present Israeli Government to honour the Oslo Accords are also closely tied to peace realities forged with our close neighbours, Egypt and Jordan. One should not forget that in parallel with the political negotiations to achieve and promote comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East, the partners to peace should also have the will and capacity to contain the dangers and enemies of peace.

In its pursuit of peace, the Government of Israel is guided by a number of principles, which I would like to elaborate. First, peace must come with security. Peace must enhance security for all concerned. Security is neither an obsession nor a blind belief. It touches upon our very existence in a region where threats and instability still prevail, to the detriment of a peaceful and cooperative regional relationship.

The present political process, which reflects a growing recognition of the futility of the use of force as a means to advance political goals, has not yet fundamentally and irreversibly changed the basic strategic setting or, more correctly, the general state of threat in which Israel - and not only Israel - exists and operates. The willingness to renounce the threat or use of force, as well as the obligation to settle conflicts by peaceful means, is not yet shared by all our neighbours. War and violence are still considered and indeed advocated by some as legitimate instruments of policy. Limitations inherent in arms control regimes are deemed by some to be marginal obstacles to be ignored or, worse, as convenient loopholes to gain access to technologies necessary to produce weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. Israel is confronted with heavily armed regimes, which profess various degrees of hostility toward it and which possess conventional and non-conventional arsenals.

In this geo-strategic setting, Israel finds itself small in size with no strategic depth. It is entirely dependent on outside sources of energy and is also poor in other natural resources, including water. The density of its population and industrial centres makes Israel especially vulnerable to

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attacks. Massive quantities of bombs and missiles, capable of indiscriminate damage and injury to the civilian population, are certainly defined by us as weapons of mass destruction.

Israel's national security doctrine and capabilities are designed to offset these strategic vulnerabilities and disadvantageous disparities.

Second, it is imperative to preserve the peace process, free of terrorism and violence. Terrorism is supported, financed, encouraged and practised by radical regimes in our region. It has assumed many forms, which are designed to disrupt the daily life of the civilian population, to undermine its resolve and to damage the economy of Israel. Above all, terrorism aims at derailing the peace process which the Government of Israel and others in the region and beyond are striving to advance.

Third, regional cooperation as well as economic and social development are critical factors in ensuring peace and stability in the long run. Israel wishes to share, as an equal partner, in the creation of regional cooperation. We do not seek to impose economic cooperation on our neighbours, nor do we wish to oblige them to cooperate with us. Still, we firmly believe that the evolution of cooperation and normalization across Arab-Israel boundaries is essential, not only to move the region to a more peaceful environment and to give true meaning and deep roots to relations of peace, but also to give Israel and the other parties a genuine sense of security that will, in turn, facilitate more ambitious arms control undertakings.

Fourth, peace and normalization are one and indivisible. Normalization is the natural product of conflict resolution. Consequently, the logic of peace and dialogue dictates that reconciliation and normalization will not be held hostage to other ends. Reconciliation between the peoples of the region and normalization among its countries must cease for ever the residue of ideological negativeness and negation.

Israel aspires to achieve peace and security for all the peoples of the Middle East, with a life free of threats and from the use of force. In this context, we hope that the day will come when a regional security framework encompassing all countries of the Middle East, as the region shall be defined, will be realized to provide a cooperative multilateral response to all the security problems of the Middle East.

The advantages of the regional approach are several - in the first instance, as a means of building trust and confidence, and thereafter of putting arms control and disarmament mechanisms into place. They by far outweigh the global approach, which cannot provide a response to the unique security problems of the Middle East in general, and to those of Israel in particular. For this reason, Israel welcomed the establishment of the Working Group on Arms Control and Regional Security (ACRS), in the context of the multilateral talks within the framework of the Middle East peace process initiated in Madrid. This group is, in our view, an essential pillar to support the peace process as a whole and an integral part of it.

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In this respect, the Middle East could certainly learn from the experiences of other regions - Europe, Latin America, Africa and the Pacific, where genuine efforts on the regional level have created mutually beneficial regional security frameworks.

In its approach to this process, Israel is guided by the need to set ambitious objectives, the pursuit of which should be conducted in a pragmatic and realistic manner. Progress should be sought wherever and whenever possible - and its pace should be determined by conditions prevailing in the region. After peaceful relations and reconciliation are established among all States in the region, Israel will endeavour to establish in the Middle East - through direct negotiations among all its members - a zone free of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, as well as ballistic missiles, based on mutual and effective verification.

No other forums that lack the unique regional features of the Madrid Multilateral Working Group on Arms Control and Regional Security can bring about meaningful progress in realizing such an ambitious arms control agenda.

Until that hoped-for time, Israel will strive, as first steps, to conduct a regional security dialogue and to implement confidence-building measures that will increase openness and build trust and cooperation, thereby making a significant contribution to ease tensions, reduce the prospects of surprise attacks, diminish the levels of suspicion and prevent armed conflict. The trust that will be built, and the parallel progress in the bilateral peace process between Israel and its neighbours, will enable the beginning of negotiations on more ambitious arms control measures.

In its concept of, and thinking on, arms control and a regional security framework, Israel is guided by several premises. First, the arms control and regional security process should enhance the security of each and every one of the States taking part in it, thereby contributing to the stability and security of the region as a whole. Second, all steps and measures to be adopted throughout the arms control and regional security process must be designed so as to increase the overall stability of the region. At no point should they diminish the security of any State, nor should they allow, at any stage of the process, any State or group of States to abuse them in order to acquire a military advantage over the others. Third, each State is entitled to an equally high level of overall security, defined as freedom from threats to its existence and well-being. Thus, structural vulnerabilities should be compensated for by offsetting capabilities. Requirements of self-defence and deterrence of aggression are the only legitimate needs that should be taken into consideration in the arms control and regional security process. Fourth, every State in the region has the right to define the threat it considers relevant to its own security. All States of the region will be called upon to do so with a view to having the arms control and the regional security process provide adequate responses to them. Fifth, the process and the agreements that may be achieved should take into account not only threats and capabilities from individual States (and non-State entities), but also threats

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and capabilities deriving from coalitions and treaties as well as from political and regional military alliances and accords between States of the region.

We regret that the promising discussions and activities of the Arms Control and Regional Security Working Group have been brought to a halt by a few, who would wish to impose certain conditions and an extraneous agenda on its work. We are hopeful of an early resumption of the Group's work and we look forward to that.

Against this background, let me expand on some process guidelines of our arms control and regional security approach as outlined above. First, the primacy of the peace process, and of the eventual peace which is to be durable and comprehensive. All regional security and arms control issues should be dealt with in this context. Second, the peace process is a regional one and must embrace every country of the region. Within this regional framework, confidence-building and security measures have to be developed. Only on such a basis can regional arms control arrangements be achieved. Third, a step-by-step approach is required. Any attempt to advance items on the overall agenda which can only be addressed at a later stage in the process will be self-defeating. Fourth, and ultimately, it is the progress achieved in the transformation of the region into a more peaceful, stable and secure environment that will govern the pace and scope of arms control measures that will be negotiated and effectively implemented in the region.

As I have indicated, Israel, when assessing its own situation, attaches primacy to regional arrangements which attempt to provide an answer to security and stability problems in the entire region. At the same time, this approach has not prevented Israel from supporting or taking part in the concerted effort of the international community to curb proliferation of either conventional or non-conventional weapons and ballistic missiles and, where appropriate, to endorse global agreements which could complement those to be established at the regional level.

Indeed, Israel has been actively supporting and participating in efforts of the international community to prevent the proliferation of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles, not least through export control mechanisms, inspired by those of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), the Australian Group (AG), and the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), of which Israel is an adherent.

With its commitment to non-proliferation in mind, Israel voted in favour of United Nations General Assembly resolution 2373 of 1968, adopting the NPT. It is satisfied with the indefinite extension of the Treaty. At the same time, for the reasons I have elaborated, Israel does not find in the NPT an adequate response to its own security problems and regional concerns - and that without mentioning violations of NPT obligations by a regional party to the Treaty.

Israel joins the community of nations in welcoming the entry into force of the Convention banning the development, production, stockpiling and use of

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chemical weapons and mandating their complete destruction. Israel is proud to have been one of the original, founding signatory States of the Convention. Our signature of the Convention and the subsequently active role we took in the joint endeavour to craft it into workable mechanisms reflect in general Israel's vision of the world in which it wishes to exist and prosper - in particular its continuing interest, which is shared by many other countries, to preserve the Convention's core balance between a State's duty to demonstrate compliance and its right to protect itself from intrusive and abusive encroachment on its security and its commercial and proprietary interests. By signing the Convention, Israel signalled its hope that others in its region will soon follow suit.

Israel belongs to those member States which have not yet ratified the Convention. This should come as no surprise to the world community cognizant of the unique strategic and political environment in which Israel still operates today. At the signing ceremony in Paris in 1993, Israel's Foreign Minister openly stated Israel's position that "the Chemical Weapons Convention must refer to our region and that the region at large must adhere to its principles". In that context, Israel then made it clear that it would seek to ratify the Convention subject to regional concerns as well as to its constitutional constraints and legislative timetable.

These considerations remain no less valid today. Israel is aware of, indeed it welcomes, the fact that certain Arab States have signed, and that some have even ratified the Convention. However, it is unfortunately also a well-known reality that none of the CW-capable or suspected CW-armed Arab States have signed, let alone ratified, the Chemical Weapons Convention. Indeed, key non-signatory Arab States have indicated collectively that they would not change their position even if Israel ratifies the Convention. Among them are countries which in the past have resorted to actual use of chemical weapons and which are believed to be developing capabilities in this field, even as the world is pledging to forsake and eradicate for ever all chemical weapons. From Israel's perspective, not only have CW threats against it not receded in recent years, but they have even gained in saliency and acuteness. What I have described, therefore, must not necessarily be construed as prejudging the outcome of a future Israeli decision on the matter of the ratification, or of the continued Israeli support for the Convention. Favourable changes in the security climate will, of course, favourably affect Israel's attitude on the ratification issue.

Israel is a party to the Convention on the use of certain conventional weapons which may be excessively injurious or have indiscriminate effects (CCW). Israel ratified this Convention in March 1995 and participated in the Review Conference, which amended Protocol II of the Convention on Landmines and adopted a new Protocol IV on Blinding Laser Weapons. Israel is presently reviewing the Revised Landmines Protocol and the new Blinding Laser Protocol. Moreover, we support the efforts being made to extend accession to the CCW by as many States as possible, particularly in the Middle East region.

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Israel has declared a moratorium on the exportation of anti-personnel landmines and has recently extended it for a further three-year period until 1999. Israel has joined efforts by the international community in clearing landmines in Angola. We are presently evaluating the possibilities of using Israeli expertise in mine clearance in other parts of the world.

Due to Israel's unique situation in the Middle East, involving an ongoing threat of hostilities from neighbouring and regional States, as well as terrorist threats and actions along its borders, Israel is still obliged to maintain its ability to use anti-personnel landmines as necessary, for self-defence in general and along the borders in particular. Any such use of anti-personnel landmines is in accordance with the requirements of the CCW. Accordingly, Israel is unable, at this juncture, to commit itself to a total ban on the use of anti-personnel landmines until effective alternative measures are available to ensure the protection of civilians threatened on a daily basis by terrorists, and to ensure the protection of Israeli defence forces operating in areas of armed conflict. At the same time, Israel supports a gradual process in which each State will undertake to cease proliferation of anti-personnel landmines, accept restrictions on possible use and, once circumstances permit, a ban on the production and use of anti-personnel landmines.

Israel would like to give its assurances that within the constraints mentioned above, it will continue to be a part of the global effort to reduce the need for, and the use of, anti-personnel landmines.

Israel welcomes the continuing operation of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and the recent report by the Secretary-General on the Register. Israel has responded on a year-by-year basis since the inception of the Register to the request, contained in relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, to provide data on its imports and exports of arms. A similar attitude by all regional parties in the Middle East would certainly contribute to confidence and trust-building in the region.

Israel's decision to sign the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is another manifestation and extension of its long-standing non-proliferation policy as described today. We joined the Partial Test-Ban Treaty (PTBT) as early as January 1964 and we are now moving forward on the CTBT.

In this context, I would like to recall my country's contribution, politically and conceptually, to the negotiations and to the drafting of the CTBT. Although the CTBT language does not satisfactorily address some of our major concerns, we supported the final text. We co-sponsored the resolution at the United Nations General Assembly and were among the first to sign thereafter. Israel also attaches great importance to the attitude of its regional neighbours to the Treaty. Their decision to become a party to the Treaty will play a supportive role at a regional level and will contribute to peace and security in the Middle East. In considering the issue of ratifying the CTBT, Israel will take into account inter alia developments in our region, including the adherence to the Treaty by key States.

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By adopting these steps and policies, Israel has demonstrated its willingness to be involved in a responsible and serious manner in the efforts of the international community to prevent the spread of conventional as well as non-conventional weapons.

Israel welcomes the agreements signed in recent years between the Russian Federation and the United States regarding their strategic weapons. These agreements, which reflect the new and promising climate in relations between those two States and their intensive dialogue on strategic issues, constitute a major guarantee for peace and security in the world today. Israel also welcomes those bilateral and regional developments in different parts of the world which contribute to national security as well as to the regional arms control and stability of those concerned. We are hopeful that the political and security environment in our own region will further improve so as to allow similar achievements.

Israel was recently admitted as a member of the Conference on Disarmament. We waited for some years for membership in this important body - the "single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum" of the family of nations. We appreciate the efforts and the tenacity of many delegations and governments to achieve the recent expansion of the CD. We agree with all those who urge the CD to keep the issue of its membership under constant and renewed scrutiny, in order to better reflect changing international and regional realities and the desire of others to contribute to the work of the CD.

We did our apprenticeship as an observer and, in effect, as an active non-member State in the CD for several years and especially throughout the CTBT negotiations, which was beneficial to us and, if I may say so, was proof of our earnestness. We believe that CD membership carries with it heavy responsibilities and we pledge to do our utmost in discharging our duties as a new member.

On the issue of the programme of work of the CD, Israel is of the view that the CD agenda has to strike an appropriate balance between the desirable and the possible. Since 1990, the CD has successfully negotiated the CWC and the CTBT and for that it deserves our appreciation. In the context of the CD programme of work, it must be remembered that the millions who have perished as a result of wars, armed conflict and civil strife since 1945 bear witness to the sheer and utter destructiveness of weapons classified as "conventional". The problems therefore lie with the reckless use of arms, of all categories, by irresponsible regimes.

As the tensions which reflected the cold war era give way to growing global confidence and cooperation, the international community should now turn more of its attention and energies towards many as yet unresolved regional conflicts, which are characterized by unprecedented conventional arms build-ups and, in some instances, also by the clandestine pursuit of nuclear, chemical or biological weapons. Apparently, Iraq and North Korea are the recent examples in this regard, but surely not the only ones - nor the last. Iran is another example of a State which is currently engaged in acquiring

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non-conventional capabilities, in a manner which is not consistent with its international obligations. Israel calls upon the international community to prevent such dangerous developments which will further destabilize the Middle East and pose a grave threat to many countries.

In view of their heavy responsibilities, CD members should strive, in our view, to set a correspondingly realistic and pragmatic programme of work, the pursuit of which will make our world more, rather than less, secure, stable and peaceful.

The CD cannot assume the tasks of other frameworks - bilateral, multilateral, regional or otherwise. It cannot dictate nor impose either agenda items or contents or timetables. The CD should continue to freely negotiate by consensus. Those treaties to be negotiated and concluded in the CD should be subject to truly universal adherence and should not remain legally binding instruments to which only like-minded States subscribe.

One more principle that should guide our future work in the CD has to do with the verification mechanism of treaties. We should maintain a careful balance between verification regimes that are reliable and effective to assure compliance, and the need to protect vital national security interests or industrial-commercial concerns. Likewise, we should not lose sight of the absolute necessity to complement effective verification with reliable enforcement to ascertain that arms control obligations are not taken lightly, and countries that behave otherwise are punished rather than rewarded.

We hope that members of the CD will be able to bridge their differences and soon embark on constructive and effective work, which has been the hallmark of the CD for some years. By so doing, the CD will rise to the main challenge of the twenty-first century, namely, that of making our globe a much more peaceful and secure place for all mankind.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Israel for his statement and for his kind words to me. I now give the floor to the representative of Ireland, Ambassador Anderson.

Ms. ANDERSON (Ireland): Mr. President, firstly, may I congratulate you very warmly on your rather unexpected but very welcome arrival in the Chair as President? We wish you well during the period ahead. I would also like to express our great appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Krasnohorská, for her very skilful handling of the presidency during her time in office. As we come to the end of our 1997 session, I would like to offer some brief reflections on topics which have been at the centre of our work for the past year.

We have had many difficult discussions relating to possible negotiations within the CD on anti-personnel landmines. These discussions have taken place in parallel to the unfolding of the Ottawa Process, which has steadily gained momentum and attracted an increasing number of participants. As we know,

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negotiations are currently taking place in Oslo which are expected to lead to the signing in Ottawa in December of an international agreement to ban the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of anti-personnel landmines.

We are encouraged to note the number of delegations who announced here in recent weeks that they would participate in the Oslo meeting with a view to signing an agreement in Ottawa. At the same time, there is a somewhat disturbing trend in many of the references to the Ottawa Process we hear in the CD. Some delegations have appeared to argue that negotiations in the CD on APLs will be essential because any agreement emerging from the Ottawa Process will not be immediately universal. This argument implies that if an international agreement, negotiated in good faith through an open-ended process, does not achieve instant universality then, in effect, negotiations on the same issue must be reopened in a more exclusive forum in an effort to capture the non-signatories.

It strikes us as odd for this, of all bodies, to suggest that an agreement which fails to attract immediate global support is so intrinsically flawed as to require a relaunching of the negotiation in the immediate aftermath of its opening for signature. We might well ask ourselves what implications such an approach would have for other disarmament negotiations.

We can confidently expect that, by January 1998, there will be an international agreement banning APLs signed by a very large number of countries. It is difficult to envisage how the signatories to such an agreement - among whom there will be, we presume, many represented in this chamber - can then embark on a separate negotiation dealing with exactly the same prohibitions with the final objective of concluding another, inevitably less stringent, regime. If we were ready to accept such a possibility before the ink is dry on the Ottawa agreement then, of course, the Ottawa agreement would never attain universality. Why should any country rush to sign the Ottawa agreement when there might be a possibility of a fresh set of negotiations in Geneva on the same issue?

In our view, there is potential here for an extremely confusing legal situation which could complicate the international effort to ban APLs. A CD agreement on APLs, if it ever came into existence, would exist alongside the Ottawa agreement and the strengthened restrictions introduced by amended Protocol II of the Inhumane Weapons Convention. Rather than having mutually reinforcing texts, we risk contradictory approaches and a weakening of the growing international resolve to end the scourge of landmines.

In summary, while we fully accept that any APL ban must seek to attract the widest possible adherence, especially from major producers and users of landmines, we are distinctly cautious about arguments which appear to downplay, in advance, the status and significance of the agreement that will be signed in Ottawa.

The second issue which has provoked torrents of words over the past year is the question of future negotiations on nuclear disarmament. Over the past week, we have seen how even the references in the CD's annual report to the

(Ms. Anderson, Ireland)

failure of the CD to make any progress can become the subject of contentious negotiations. Differences over how best to reflect a failure are hardly a creditable end to an indifferent year for the CD.

Early in the 1997 session, I indicated our view that the step-by-step approach to nuclear disarmament had produced sufficient progress to justify continuing confidence in its utility. The next step in this approach should be the opening of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off convention in accordance with the Shannon mandate which the CD has adopted by consensus.

At the same time, my delegation supported calls for a mechanism in the CD, an ad hoc committee if you will, which would permit us to examine what further multilateral negotiations the CD might usefully undertake in support of the goal of the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons. Such an ad hoc committee could examine any proposal presented to it, including the programme of action presented by members of the G-21 in August 1996, the report of the Canberra Commission and whatever other proposals delegations would wish to put forward. The discussions under such a mechanism should not be rhetorical but pragmatic, an effort to map out further possible multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament while taking full account of the progress made in the bilateral or plurilateral negotiations between the nuclear Powers. We see no reason why these discussions should not take place in parallel to negotiations on fissile cut-off.

Over the past year there has been little progress, despite the best efforts of successive CD Presidents, in reconciling the differing approaches to nuclear disarmament. There is some sign of an emerging middle ground in the CD which appears willing to explore the compromises necessary to make progress. There are also, however, indications that the positions of some delegations have become even more entrenched.

Cynics might suggest that the current impasse serves the interest of any delegation which, for whatever reason, does not want to see immediate progress on nuclear disarmament. My delegation has not yet succumbed to such cynicism. However, if we reconvene here in 1998 only to settle comfortably back into our trenches, the cynics will have their day and the credibility of this body will be further called into question.

The current rate of progress towards multilateral disarmament is unacceptably slow. The international community needs now, not in the next millennium, to consider how best to translate the goal of the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons into a more concrete reality; to explore and agree how and by what means this goal might be achieved. Such a consideration should be a means to help us to appreciate the problems and difficulties, which might require multilaterally negotiated solutions, associated with the elimination of nuclear weapons. It seems to us that the CD, with its accumulated experience of complex disarmament negotiations on weapons of mass destruction, is the ideal forum in which to carry forward discussions on the technical and legal questions which must be confronted if we are to achieve the elimination of nuclear weapons.

(Ms. Anderson, Ireland)

We very much hope that, before the next session, all delegations will undertake a profound reassessment of their positions on the crucial issue, the priority issue, of nuclear disarmament negotiations. To facilitate our further deliberations, we see scope for closer cooperation between delegations, no matter what their regional affiliation, who have a flexible rather than a dogmatic approach on this central issue of our time.

Finally, I should like to address briefly the issue of CD expansion. I would be dishonest if I did not express our disappointment at the lack of progress on this matter. We regret the hiatus between January 1997, when the CD agreed to appoint a Coordinator on expansion, and June 1997, when the appointment was finally made. We thank Ambassador Kreid for his work, which had to be conducted within a very limited time-frame.

What has been established so far is not encouraging. While it seems there is agreement in principle in the CD to a further expansion, many delegations have qualified their agreement with a series of caveats and conditions, all of which are meticulously recorded in the Special Coordinator's report. Reading through all of this, it is difficult to avoid an impression of a lack of political will on the part of many members to tackle the expansion issue in a meaningful way.

We are grateful to those delegations who both publicly and privately have encouraged us to maintain our efforts to secure membership. We hope that these and other delegations will press for early progress in 1998 in addressing the issues raised in Ambassador Kreid's report.

While developments so far offer little ground for optimism, we continue to hope that a more positive and fair-minded attitude will prevail and that we may yet see a real seriousness of purpose on the part of this Conference in addressing the enlargement issue.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Ireland for her statement and for her kind words to me. I now give the floor to the representative of Indonesia, Ambassador Tarmidzi.

Mr. TARMIDZI (Indonesia): Mr. President, since this is the first time that my delegation takes the floor under your presidency, like previous speakers before me, allow me at the outset to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I am confident that with your extensive experience and under your able guidance, we will be able to achieve significant progress in our work at this particularly difficult juncture. At the same time, I also wish to express our satisfaction and gratitude to your distinguished predecessors, Ambassador Diallo of Senegal, Ambassador Berdennikov of the Russian Federation and Ambassador Krasnohorská of Slovakia, for their tireless efforts to achieve progress in our deliberations and negotiations during their presidency. I also use this occasion to welcome the new members and distinguished Ambassadors to the Conference on Disarmament.

(Mr. Tarmidzi, Indonesia)

In taking the floor today, I am fully aware that my delegation has somewhat refrained from making many interventions or statements, especially during the second and this current session of 1997. I can assure you that this is certainly not because we do not want to participate or contribute to the proceedings, but simply because we did not want to complicate your job or that of previous Presidents unnecessarily. More importantly, I can assure you that our silence should be understood to mean that we are flexible. When we say flexible, we mean genuine flexibility in the spirit of cooperation and compromise in view of the different positions of member countries, including Indonesia.

In my previous statement delivered during the first session, we had stated our position on the various issues and we shall maintain this position in our efforts to find solutions in our negotiations in the CD. In this context, I would like to re-emphasize that our flexibility means that we are open to any proposal presented at this forum, and that we are ready to discuss it as long as it can bring valuable progress to push our deliberations or negotiations forward. When we say we are open, this also means that we can accept the decision of the CD to discuss all matters pertaining to the procedural as well as to the substantive items contained in the agenda, either in its entirety or partially, if the members so wish. Again, this is for the sake of the credibility of the CD.

However, if we are of the view that the agenda should be based on the existing Decalogue, it is because we think - and I believe that this view is also shared by most members - the Decalogue is still relevant to the present world situation. If any country wishes to discuss the relevance of the Decalogue, we are ready to do so. Likewise, if we have stated that our top priority is nuclear disarmament, it is because it has logic and relevance and because it has always been the concern of the international community. The logic and reason of our priority in nuclear disarmament lie in the most prominent international agreements which are universally adhered to, namely the 1970 Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the 1978 Final Document of the first special session on Disarmament (SSOD-I), which I believe are recognized and adhered to by most of us in the CD. But again, I repeat that we are open to any suggestions by members wishing to discuss nuclear or conventional weapons, or both, or any other issue, as long as there is a balance between these two items.

If members of the CD think that the time is not yet opportune to discuss those matters of concern and wish to discuss some or any single aspect of each issue, then we are willing to listen. In the context of nuclear disarmament, for example, we could start discussing the fissile material cut-off treaty (FACT) or negative security assurances (NSA). We believe that, in the end, the completion of our negotiation on these issues could strengthen our efforts to achieve comprehensive nuclear disarmament, as in the case of the NPT and the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). On the other hand, if members wish to discuss any element of conventional disarmament, such as anti-personnel landmines (APLs), my delegation is ready to do so. Even though we are of the view that the CD is the only appropriate forum to address this important and timely issue, we also welcome in principle any other endeavour aimed at

(Mr. Tarmidzi, Indonesia)

eliminating this indiscriminate weapon, inter alia, the Ottawa Process, since those tracks could, in our view, also lead to the elimination and total ban of these inhuman weapons. Indonesia is very much concerned with the humanitarian effects resulting from the indiscriminate use of landmines. However, it is our belief that with regard to APLs, their total ban should apply also to those using "sophisticated technology" and not just to the traditional ones, for Indonesia cannot support a policy which implies technological discrimination.

When the first session of the CD started in January 1997, a strong feeling of optimism prevailed whereby this year's session would bring new hope for all of us in our endeavours to further accelerate negotiations in the field of disarmament. We entered this session with a common understanding that only with a sense of goodwill and of flexibility could the tangible success we achieved last year be repeated, when the long awaited CTBT was finally concluded. Regretfully, the slow progress, if not the lack of progress, in our deliberations proves that this seems not to be the case at this session, as is the case of our inability so far to finalize the CD's report to the United Nations General Assembly.

I believe that the word "flexibility" has become very familiar in our forum since it has been quoted and repeated many times during our deliberations. We have been listening attentively to tens, or perhaps hundreds of statements and lectures on the need for flexibility in order to solve our problem and achieve significant progress in our deliberations. Many times we have heard pledges and promises to be flexible, and also cooperative, in finding solutions to our divergences of views.

However, it is unfortunate that so far this "sacred" word has only been floating in the air most of the time during this 1997 CD session. What we have in fact witnessed in the last few months is exactly the opposite. An attitude of inflexibility has dominated our deliberations. For the sake of sometimes rather narrow national interests, we have somehow wasted our time, energy and even perhaps our resources. Moreover, because of our inflexibility we have missed the opportunity to achieve the concrete results prescribed by our mandate which are also the wish of the international community. We should observe all these points with regret and concern.

If, during this session, lack of flexibility has hampered our work and led us to a deadlock, there is nothing that my delegation can do to help solve this problem. Therefore, if my delegation has a wish, it will be a simple one. We wish that in the coming sessions of 1998 we can again make progress in our deliberations, and we hope that the spirit of cooperation, goodwill and flexibility will again prevail in this august assembly.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Indonesia for his statement and for his kind words to me. I now give the floor to the representative of Australia.

Ms. HAND (Australia): I would just like to make a simple comment to the assembly this morning, noting on behalf of Ambassador Campbell, who is presently away leading the Australian delegation to the negotiations in Oslo, that Ambassador Campbell has concluded bilateral discussions with all but a very small number of, so far, unavailable delegations. His consultations, which he continued last week, continue to yield interesting insights substantially supporting those conclusions he offered to colleagues in his statement to the plenary last week. From the Australian point of view, we welcome the suggestion made by Ambassador Akram that the President undertake consultations with regard to the work of all four Special Coordinators in the inter-sessional period. Ambassador Campbell, I know, looks forward to participating in consultations on APLs or any of those other issues in any way that the President would find useful.

Mr. de ICAZA (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, allow me first of all to convey to you the satisfaction of my delegation at seeing you conducting our work. You may count on our support and cooperation.

The delegation of Mexico would like to express appreciation for the reports submitted by the Special Coordinators on improved and effective functioning, the expansion of membership, the agenda and the question of anti-personnel landmines. I would like to convey to them the appreciation of my delegation for the efforts they made to discharge and complete the mandates entrusted to them by the Conference on 26 June 1997. The reports on the agenda, improved and effective functioning and on expansion of membership contain very useful analytical elements that will lead the Conference to continue to reflect on each of these important items in the future. I have asked for the floor today to refer briefly to the reports submitted on 14 and 28 August by the Special Coordinator on anti-personnel mines. As the Conference will remember, the question of anti-personnel mines was the subject of many proposals and lengthy consultations. On 26 June it was decided to appoint a Special Coordinator entrusted with conducting consultations on a possible mandate on the question of anti-personnel landmines, to take into consideration the proposals and opinions on the matter and to submit an early report to the Conference on Disarmament.

The delegation of Mexico announced on that occasion that it would not oppose consultations being held with a view to determining whether there is consensus in the Conference on Disarmament to negotiate a legally binding agreement for the total banning of anti-personnel mines. We emphasized that such an appointment would not imply that the Conference had decided to embark on negotiations on anti-personnel mines, much less that an arrangement had been established to negotiate on any aspect of the mines problem. On this understanding, the delegation of Mexico agreed to the appointment of a Special Coordinator on mines.

It is well known that Mexico has participated in the Ottawa Process since its inception with a view to achieving a total ban on anti-personnel landmines before the end of this year. A binding instrument to this end is now being negotiated in Oslo, and the delegation of Mexico is participating actively in those negotiations. Within a few hours I myself will be in Oslo

(Mr. de ICAZA, Mexico)

heading our delegation. We are not convinced, as we have stated on many occasions, that the Conference on Disarmament is an appropriate forum for the early conclusion of negotiations for a ban on the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel landmines. The reasons are few in number and well known to all, but they are powerful and worth repeating.

Anti-personnel landmines should be completely proscribed. They are indiscriminate weapons whose use is a violation of international humanitarian law. Twenty-five thousand victims a year are more than enough to make the achievement of a legally binding total ban on these weapons a matter of the utmost urgency. Treaties and conventions in the field of international humanitarian law in which a balance is sought between military requirements and the protection due to non-combatants have been and should be negotiated in ad hoc open-ended forums in which decisions are adopted by a majority.

The Conference on Disarmament is not the appropriate forum to negotiate rules of international humanitarian law. It has other objectives and other priorities. In this sole multilateral forum for negotiations on disarmament and arms control we are seeking to balance the legitimate security needs of States with the urgent need to preserve peace and international security. Our priorities are the elimination of weapons of mass destruction and a balanced reduction of armed forces and conventional weapons. It is doubtful whether such a balanced reduction can be achieved by eliminating conventional weapons one by one.

But in addition, the Conference on Disarmament is not conspicuous for rapidity in its negotiations. The banning of anti-personnel mines cannot wait for decades. The time has come. Allow me here to depart for a moment from my written text to say that, of course, I fully subscribe to the argument used in this room this morning by the distinguished Ambassador of Ireland.

Notwithstanding these considerations, the delegation of Mexico agreed that consultations should be held to determine whether there is among the membership of this Conference a common view on how to solve the humanitarian drama of the existence of anti-personnel landmines.

In his report of 14 August, the Special Coordinator on anti-personnel mines outlined four possible options for a mandate, ranging from simultaneous negotiations on all questions related to a total and effective ban on anti-personnel landmines to a mere review and discussion of the world situation regarding these weapons. In a forum where no votes are taken, where decisions are taken by consensus, the degree of support enjoyed by one option or another is of little importance. Assessments as to where majorities or minorities lie are subjective and are beside the point. That is why consultations were asked for and not a head count. What is important is to identify areas of possible consensus.

We are not surprised that there is a wide spectrum of opinions in the Conference on Disarmament on how to address the problem of mines. We were expecting it. There is no consensus in this Conference to embark on negotiations on a complete ban on anti-personnel mines by means of a legally

(Mr. de ICAZA, Mexico)

binding agreement, to be achieved as soon as possible, in response to the United Nations General Assembly's call to all States in resolution 51/45 S. On the basis of the information provided by the Special Coordinator on mines, it seems unlikely that a consensus along these lines can be reached in this forum in the foreseeable future. So much for the argument that negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament would bring in the major producers and exporters. Apparently some of them do not wish to ban anti-personnel mines either in this or in any other forum.

The Special Coordinator has made no recommendation regarding institutional arrangements. He did well to refrain from doing so, for any recommendation on this matter would have gone beyond the terms of his mandate, in which references to institutional arrangements that appeared in the draft decision were purposely omitted.

The question of whether an arrangement to deal with anti-personnel mines should or should not be established, and the most appropriate moment to do so, depends not only on achieving a consensus on a possible mandate but also, and above all, on the decisions the Conference on Disarmament will take regarding the agenda and the programme of work.

In keeping with the decision of 26 June, the Special Coordinator on mines was to present an early report on his consultations. He has presented two. We thank him for them. We are now aware that there is no consensus in the Conference on Disarmament on a possible mandate to negotiate a complete ban on anti-personnel landmines.

The 1997 session of the Conference on Disarmament will end in the next few days. While we regret that it was not possible to begin substantive work on any of the items on the agenda, we think that useful thinking on the direction that the Conference on Disarmament should follow did take place this year. The work of the Special Coordinators falls in this context. Their contribution has been stimulating and enlightening. At the beginning of its 1998 session we will have to determine the agenda and the programme of work of the Conference. We will then examine the proposals made by all the delegations with all the respect they deserve.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Mexico for his statement and for his kind words to me. That concludes my list of speakers for today. I recognize the Ambassador of Pakistan.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): My delegation would like to make a very brief statement with regard to where the Conference on Disarmament finds itself today, at the end of its 1997 session. We have all heard in this hall over the past several weeks a spate of statements to the effect that the Conference on Disarmament has been unable to reach agreement on any negotiations for the current year. The impression has sought to be created that the Conference on Disarmament is an unwieldy and unworkable body which cannot reach agreement on any issue of substance and, therefore, other forums are perhaps more suited for serious work than this, the single multilateral negotiating body on disarmament.

(Mr. Akram, Pakistan)

I would like to say for the record today that this assertion is very far from the truth. The truth of the matter is that there are in this hall a number of delegations which have assumed positions on certain issues that are so trenchant and so rigid that they will not allow this forum to proceed with what is its responsibility to undertake negotiations on the items which are placed on its agenda. When we agree to place any item on our agenda, it is with the express understanding that that item is there on the agenda for the purposes of negotiation. Yet when we have turned to the task of creating our negotiation mechanisms, we have been prevented from doing so. And the root of the problems, I must state again for the record, is the refusal of a few States, a handful of States, to allow the Conference on Disarmament to negotiate on what is the highest priority for the international community, that is, nuclear disarmament. It is said that the Conference on Disarmament is an inappropriate forum for nuclear disarmament, that nuclear disarmament is an inappropriate subject for this Conference. But let us turn to our agreements. Let us turn to where we have achieved consensus. Wherever we have achieved consensus, we have all agreed that nuclear disarmament is the highest priority for the international community and that this is the single multilateral negotiating body. If you add two and two, it adds up to four, which means that this is the place where we should be negotiating on nuclear disarmament.

But some States claim that this higher responsibility is only for two or three or five States to negotiate, and the rest of us should deal with small, peripheral matters. Sometimes landmines, sometimes fissile material, sometimes some other issue that can be found on the rack that is not being dealt with elsewhere. It can be consigned to the rabble which constitutes the Conference on Disarmament. This is unacceptable to my delegation, and I believe that this is unacceptable to the majority, the "silent" majority, if I may say, of the membership of this Conference.

We are now faced with a situation where this refusal to acknowledge the work that has been done in this Conference this year on nuclear disarmament is likely, or at least threatens, to prevent this Conference from adopting even a factual report. It is shocking for my delegation to find some delegations resisting a factual reference in our report to the fact that a proposal was made by the Group of 21 to create an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament, that a proposal was made by a group of 26 countries suggesting a concrete mandate for negotiations on nuclear disarmament. This was achieved by the group concerned after considerable work, considerable negotiations, and even if we did not work in the Conference as a whole, countries engaged in this hall did undertake very substantive negotiations in order to come forward with those agreed proposals and positions. And they were serious positions, serious proposals that could have opened the door for the Conference on Disarmament to make progress, not only on nuclear disarmament, but also on fissile materials and other issues that were proposed for consideration by the Conference on Disarmament this year. But all this was frustrated because of the trenchant positions of a handful of States.

(Mr. Akram, Pakistan)

We hope that this Conference will not end up this year with no report, because that is also a possibility in view of the positions that I have described. I hope that at this crucial moment that majority of delegations who are committed to the multilateral disarmament negotiating process will rally behind a position that is fair and just and not succumb to the kind of process that has frozen this Conference into inactivity in 1997.

Mr. HAN (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): My delegation had not planned to take the floor this morning, but it has been forced to do so by certain circumstances. This morning the delegate of Israel mentioned my country and some others in his statement, groundlessly abusing my country, so I would like to speak briefly about this matter. My delegation categorically rejects the accusation put forward by the Israeli delegation and expresses great surprise at why the Israeli delegation spoke in that manner. It is a grave concern and worry of the international community that Israel is still occupying the territories of Arab countries and causing much suffering and sacrifice. It is not only certain countries or regions that are concerned. It is the concern of the whole world. They are not telling the truth. They are raising such questions here this morning because they want to hide these facts and divert world attention from Israel's hostile policies. This is intolerable in the Conference on Disarmament, where it is common practice not to mention countries for one's own purposes. They are violating those practices in this Conference. I wonder what their purpose is in mentioning such things in this meeting. It is only to divert world attention from Israel. I appeal to this forum not to allow such behaviour in the future.

Mr. ZIABARI (Islamic Republic of Iran): I should congratulate you, Mr. President, upon the assumption of the presidency of this august body. I am very sorry that when I take the floor here for the first time, it is to ask for the right of reply. But that is beyond our control, so I shall be brief in addressing the allegations made here today by a delegate.

I should state the following in exercising the right of reply. We regret the allegations made by the delegate of Israel with regard to the peaceful nuclear activities of our country. It reveals why there were many reservations on the admission of Israel, a regime of oppression and occupation, to this august body. It is ironic to hear these allegations from a country whose stubborn pursuit of weapons of mass destruction and policies and programmes are a matter of concern not only to countries of the Middle East but also to the whole world. It is ironic to hear these allegations from a country which has not ratified the NPT and has not accepted the IAEA safeguards. As for us, we have ratified the NPT and have opened all our facilities to IAEA inspection. To sum up, I would like to remind the delegate of Israel that "people who live in glass houses should not throw stones". It is better for Israel to address the legitimate concerns of the international community over its determination to acquire weapons of mass destruction and to stop its deception and accusations.

Mr. AL-TIKRITI (Iraq) (translated from Arabic): In fact, like some of our colleagues, I did not intend to speak in this connection. However, the statements made by some of our colleagues and the declaration by the representative of Israel have prompted me to ask for the floor.

First of all, I personally do not want this forum to be the scene of diatribes between delegations or accusations made by one party against another. The responsibility of this Conference, as everyone is aware, is clear and well known and the functions assigned to the Conference are also clear and well known. I therefore propose that in this forum we should focus on the basic functions assigned to us and that the details, modalities and objectives of other issues should be left to other United Nations bodies and organizations and international forums since these issues fall within the scope of their responsibilities. If we wish to speak of weapons and how they are acquired, etc., this is a matter which, in my opinion, would require lengthy discussion over a period of weeks or even months. Therefore we should avoid a dialogue of the deaf or one which could become a philosophical debate to determine the sex of the angels.

The question of strategic weapons in the Middle East stems from a situation in which some countries of the Middle East, and I am speaking here of some of the Arab States, have acquired strategic weapons not on their own initiative but as a reaction to the fact that Israel had acquired strategic weapons in their most dangerous form, namely nuclear weapons. Of course, this is known to the international community and it is something on which we do not need to debate. Israel is continuing to occupy Arab land. This is a well-known fact. Therefore, Mr. President, if you will allow me, I would like to reiterate my proposal that, in this forum, we should focus on our basic duties and avoid diatribes and mutual accusations.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Iraq for his statement. That concludes my list of speakers for today. I recognize the representative of Finland. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. REIMAA (Finland): Mr. President, let me start by congratulating you on the assumption of the presidency and assure you of the full cooperation of my delegation. The 1997 session of the CD has been a period of reflection after the successful conclusion of negotiations on the CTBT. During this year's session, we have been witness to intensive discussions on various topics which the CD might address next. It is evident that countries have different priorities depending on their national security concerns. However, in order to find common ground for future CD work, we need to determine which issues have realistic possibilities for obtaining concrete results within a reasonable time-frame. In our view, the CD cannot afford another year of reflection. The CD is a negotiating forum. It is important for the CD to be able to start real negotiations from the very beginning of the 1998 session. To make this possible, intensive consultations are needed during the inter-sessional period.

Finland was very pleased that the Conference agreed in June on the appointment of four Special Coordinators, on anti-personnel landmines, the

(Mr. Reimaa, Finland)

agenda, improved and effective functioning and CD expansion. This was an important step forward in practical work and, within the very short time available, all the four Coordinators were able to conduct extensive consultations and submit reports. All the Coordinators indicated, however, that there had not been enough time to come up with specific recommendations. For the credibility of the work of the Conference, it is necessary that the mandates of those Special Coordinators who need more time to conclude their work be extended. The Conference should give them the possibility of conducting inter-sessional consultations if they so wish. We would also like to emphasize the role of the President of the Conference in conducting appropriate consultations in the inter-sessional period to enable the Conference to decide upon its work effectively at the beginning of next year. We would also like to see a clear reference to this in the CD's annual report.

Finland continues to believe that the CD has an important role to play in the strengthening of global security and stability. It is the task of the Conference to review its functioning, membership and agenda in order to be able to respond to the expectations of the international community. The ideas reflected in the Special Coordinators' reports form a very good basis for further elaboration of those issues.

Finland was one of the three countries which in March 1997 made a proposal on the appointment of a Special Coordinator on anti-personnel landmines. We commend Ambassador Campbell for his diligent work as Special Coordinator on this issue and strongly support his request to continue his work during the inter-sessional period. We are well aware of the concerns of the international community for eliminating APLs, thereby reducing the number of innocent people who fall victim every year to the indiscriminate use of these weapons. We recognize the humanitarian impulse created by the Ottawa Process and the meeting that is currently taking place in Oslo. The Ottawa Process has greatly strengthened momentum towards a total ban on APLs.

We have stated repeatedly that Finland wants a global, verifiable and legally binding ban on APLs. In order to negotiate a global treaty, due consideration must be given to the national security concerns of the States involved. The CD is the forum where the security aspects of the ban on APLs can be properly addressed. The CD should agree without delay to the establishment of an ad hoc committee with a mandate to deal with anti-personnel landmines. This is an urgent issue that should not be linked to other issues.

And as to some statements just made during this plenary, I would only repeat that we respect the work of the Coordinators, including the very valuable work of Ambassador Campbell, and we should also respect the wish they have expressed in their reports to have more time to complete their tasks if they need it. As we understand the situation today, we have not yet reached a consensus on what basis we will finally be able to start real work on APLs.

To conclude, in this connection, I would like to state that another issue that we consider of great importance is the fissile material cut-off treaty. Negotiations on this should be started on the agreed mandate without further delay. We see the FMCT as an important step in the process of nuclear disarmament.

Mr. BOUCHAARA (Morocco) (translated from French): Just to ascertain your intentions, Mr. President. Do you intend to call informal consultations after this plenary meeting, so that we can tell the Finnish delegation informally what we think of its proposal?

Mr. RIVASSEAU (France) (translated from French): Very briefly, Mr. President, I would like to indicate that the spirit of the statement made by the Finnish delegation is in line with the views of my own delegation, and in the spirit that prompted the statement by Morocco I would like to indicate that I do not intend to respond in plenary to the statement by the Ambassador of Pakistan.

The PRESIDENT: I thank you for your statement. The distinguished representative of Morocco inquired how we are going to proceed. If you will recall, when we met for informal consultations yesterday, we agreed that there would be an informal plenary immediately after this plenary with a view to discussing the draft report to the United Nations General Assembly. I would like to repeat once again that we will be discussing the report to the United Nations General Assembly. If there are no other delegations wishing to take the floor, then I would like to adjourn this meeting and thereafter convene the informal plenary immediately. But before doing so I would like to stress once again, today being Thursday, if the delegations are interested in having the draft report in the official languages, we should have finished the consideration of the draft report this morning. That not being the case, we can continue our consideration of the report but I cannot guarantee that there will be translations of the report - if we are going to have a report in the end.

If there are no other delegations wishing to take the floor, I would like to adjourn this plenary and immediately thereafter convene the informal plenary. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held next Tuesday, 9 September, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 12 noon.